

ANCIENT MYTHS
IN MODERN POETS



HELEN A. CLARKE



NO LONGER PROPERTY OF

ANCIENT MYTHS IN
MODERN POETS

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

"HAWTHORNE'S COUNTRY"

"BROWNING'S ITALY"

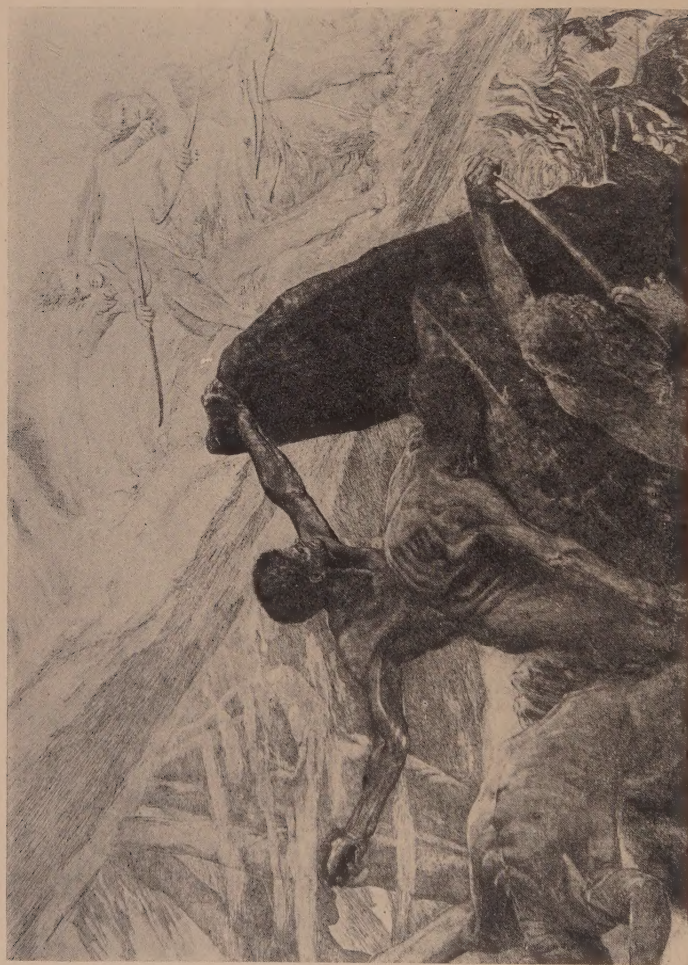
"BROWNING'S ENGLAND"

"A CHILD'S GUIDE TO MYTHOLOGY"

"LONGFELLOW'S COUNTRY"

THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY

33 East 17th Street, Union Square North, New York



THE WAR OF THE TITANS. (MAX KLINGER.)

Reproduced by permission of Mr. Hugo Reisinger and the authorities of the *Copley Society* from an etching in the German Exhibition.

ANCIENT MYTHS
IN
MODERN POETS

BY
HELEN ARCHIBALD CLARKE

AUTHOR OF
"BROWNING'S ITALY," "BROWNING'S ENGLAND,"
"LONGFELLOW'S COUNTRY," ETC.

NEW YORK
THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY
MCMX

BRESCIA COLLEGE LIBRARY
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

COPYRIGHT, 1910, BY
THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY

Published, September, 1910

821.09
C598

THE TROW PRESS, NEW YORK

CONTENTS

The Prometheus Myth from Hesiod to Shelley

PAGE

- I. The Ancient Greek Stories and their
Interpretation 3
- II. Poetic Treatment of the Myth in
Shelley and Other Modern Poets 55

The Moon and the Sun from the Homeric Hymns to Keats

- III. Diana and Endymion Before and
After Keats 135
- IV. The Titan Sun of Keats 275

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The War of the Titans . . . <i>Max Klinger</i> Frontispiece	
Prometheus Bound	10
Io, Hermes and Argus	20
Prometheus bringing fire from Heaven <i>Max Klinger</i> . . .	32
Prometheus Unbound . . . <i>Max Klinger</i> . . .	110
Diana	136
Diana and her Nymphs	142
Cynthia	172
Artemis gazing upon the sleep- ing Endymion	248
Endymion	258
Hyperion <i>Watts</i>	276
Apollo	326

THE PROMETHEUS MYTH FROM
HESIOD TO SHELLEY

I.

The Prometheus Myth from Hesiod to Shelley

THE ANCIENT GREEK STORIES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

AMONG ancient classical myths there is not one which makes a stronger appeal to the imagination than the myth of Prometheus. This is not strange, for it contains within it the seeds of all human development. Revolt against autocratic power, service and suffering in the cause of humanity, the gift of fire—what are these but the tools wherewith human aspiration works for social and artistic progress! The ideal of evolved Democracy is latent in the myth. Prometheus might well stand as the symbol of the Cause so eloquently championed by Whitman in his profound lines:

"To thee, old cause!

Thou peerless, passionate, good cause,
Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,
Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands,
After a strange sad war, great war for thee,

These chants for thee, the eternal march of thee.

Thou orb of many orbs!

Thou seething principle! thou well-kept, latent germ,
thou center!

Around the idea of thee the war revolving
With all its angry and vehement play of causes,
(With vast results to come for thrice a thousand
years.)"

The story of Prometheus first appears in Greek literature in Hesiod, both in the "Theogony" and in the "Works and Days." But the Titan of the earlier poet is not the grand figure which dominates the wonderful play of Æschylus. The war is on between Prometheus and Zeus, the ruler of gods and men, but it has degenerated from the magnificent cosmic battles of earlier days when Zeus fought Kronos and his siding hosts of Titans with his mighty thunders and lightnings, hurling them from Heaven into the abyss of Tartaros far

under the earth. Trickery and theft are the weapons of Prometheus against Zeus in this later form of struggle, which, though less splendid, does, after all, imply progress from brute force to more intellectual ways of gaining the upper hand.

Besides Prometheus, there were other Titans who escaped the fate of eternal imprisonment in Tartaros. Okeanos, the god of the great river encircling the world was so far off as to be beyond the noise of battle. He was on this account left undisturbed. Also the brothers of Prometheus, Menœtius, Atlas and Epimetheus escaped the "general doom," but Zeus does not seem to have found any of these Titan-brothers to his taste, for Menœtius he cast down to Hell for his haughtiness; Atlas he forced to prop up Heaven by his own unaided strength, because of his crimes; Epimetheus he forced to be a curse to mankind by sending him Pandora; and Prometheus he had bound with enduring chains on Mount Caucasus, thus training "his shifting wiles with galling shackles." Nor was this all, for this implacable god sent down from on high his eagle, who hovering above Prometheus ever with wings outspread, devoured

by day his liver, which during the night was renewed. There came a day, however, when the eagle was slain by Herakles, and Prometheus relieved of his pains, Zeus consenting to the deed in order that more glory might come to Herakles, and thereafter ceasing to feel the wrath he felt before against one who had striven in wisdom against him.

The particulars of the squabble between Zeus and Prometheus which led to the punishment are not inspiring as related by Hesiod. A strife over the sacrifices having arisen between gods and men, Prometheus with willful intent to deceive Zeus divided into two parts a huge ox. In one part he put all the flesh and the rich substances of the animal wrapped up in the skin, and in the other he put the white bones carefully concealed in fat. These he placed before Zeus, who said, meaning to rebuke him, "Son of Iäpetus¹, how partial are thy divided shares." Then the wily Prometheus answered with a suppressed laugh, remindful of his fraud, "Hail glorious Jove! thou mightiest of the gods, who shall endure forever; choose the one which

¹ See Translation by Charles Abraham Elton.

now the Spirit in thy breast persuades." He spoke, bent upon treachery, but Zeus whose wisdom is eternal knew the guile, and straightway devising evil to mortals, he, foreknowing, chose the whitening bones so cunningly overlaid with the fat. Then again with indignation he addressed Prometheus, "Son of Iäpetus! of all most wise! Still, friend! rememberest thou thy arts of guile?" and from that very hour he denied to all the dwellers upon earth the strength of fire. But Prometheus, again resorting to his cunning, stole fire from heaven in a hollow fennel stalk. For these things he was punished in the manner already described. But Zeus, not satisfied with the punishment of Prometheus alone, planned another mischief to mankind. At his request Hephaistos fashioned from the yielding clay a virgin likeness. Then Athênê clasped around her waist a girdle, and clothed her in flowing white robes, and placed upon her head a wondrous veil of variegated threads. She entwined amidst her hair delicious wreaths of verdant herbage and fresh blooming flowers and set a golden mitre on her brow, which had been wrought by Hephaistos. Rich carven

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

figures of animals that range the earth and the fishes of the rolling deep enchased the border, and so exquisite was the art, it seemed as if these figures moved and breathed with vocal sounds of life.

When Hephaistos had framed this "beauteous bane" he led her forth among the other gods and mingled men, and they were seized with ravishment and wonder when they saw the deep deceit, the inextricable snare. Hesiod here indulges in a diatribe against women whom he calls a pernicious race. He compares them to the drones in the bee-hives pampered by the bees—evidently unaware of the fact that the drones in a bee-hive are males, who are kept by the workers—the undeveloped females, and that these industrious creatures finally rise up in their wrath and slaughter the drones wholesale. To this ancient misanthrope the advent of woman in the world presents a dilemma—for if a man should not marry, he would feel the need of the care of a wife in his old age, besides having no heirs, and if he should marry, he will live "bearing in his secret heart and soul inevitable sorrow." Therefore he con-

cludes it is not lawful to elude the eye of Heaven nor mock the omniscient mind. For not Prometheus the benevolent could shun Heaven's heavy wrath, and vain were all his arts of various wisdom: vain to 'scape necessity or loose the mighty chain. This is all the "Theogony" tells of the Pandora story. Only in the "Works and Days" do we learn in what way Pandora affected the welfare of mankind. Each of the gods bestows upon this "beauteous bane" some gift. Athênê teaches her skill that sheds a thousand colors in the gliding threads, Aphrodite gives her the witchery of grace, Hermes implants thievish manners and a shameless mind, and because of all these gifts she receives the name Pandora. Then Zeus commands Hermes to take Pandora through the air to Epimetheus. He, disregarding the warning of Prometheus to refuse any gift that might be sent to him from the skies, and immediately restore it lest any ill might arise to men, accepts Pandora, and realizes too late the insidiousness of the gift. Pandora lifts the lid of a box in the keeping of Epimetheus, and scatters ills innumerable in the air. Hope alone remained within. Pandora, by

Zeus's counsels, having dropped the lid of the box just in time to save Hope for mankind.

Under the reverent touch of Æschylus, the myth takes on a deeper meaning. Prometheus becomes the personification of a divine love to mankind, the race hated by Zeus. Impressively the scene opens with Strength, Force and Hephaistos chaining and riveting Prometheus to the Scythian rock according to the instructions of Zeus. The humanizing art of Æschylus at once shows itself by his giving to Hephaistos deep sympathy for Prometheus and repugnance for the task he is obliged to perform. He exclaims:

“ O Strength and Force, for you, our Zeus's will
Presents a deed for doing, no more!—but I,
I lack your daring, up this storm-rent chasm
To fix with violent hands a kindred god,
Howbeit necessity compels me so
That I must dare it, and our Zeus commands
With a most inevitable word. Ho, thou!
High-thoughted son of Themis who is sage!
Thee loth, I loth must rivet fast in chains
Against this rocky height unclomb by man,
Where never human voice nor face shall find
Out thee who lov'st them, and thy beauty's flower,



PROMETHEUS BOUND.

(WITH ÆSCHYLUS IN THE FOREGROUND.)

From frescoes in Boston Public Library: Puvis de Chavannes.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Scorched in the sun's clear heat, shall fade away.
Night shall come up with garniture of stars
To comfort thee with shadow, and the sun
Disperse with retriect beams the morning-frosts,
But through all changes sense of present woe
Shall vex thee sore, because with none of them
There comes a hand to free. Such fruit is plucked
From love of man! and in that thou, a god,
Didst brave the wrath of gods and give away
Undue respect to mortals, for that crime
Thou art adjudged to guard this joyless rock,
Erect, unslumbering, bending not the knee,
And many a cry and unavailing moan
To utter on the air. For Zeus is stern,
And new-made kings are cruel."¹

Left alone upon the high jutting rocks at the ends of the earth Prometheus is visited first by the Okeanides, sea Nymphs who also express deep sympathy for him. They anxiously desire him to explain the cause for which he is made to suffer. He tells his own story—a far more dignified account than that in Hesiod. Though he declares to speak of it or to keep silence is torture, he very humanly chooses the woe of speech as what person

¹ See Translation by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

overwhelmed with pain does not. He relates how, when the war arose between the two factions of the gods, one of whom desired to cast Kronos from his throne, in order that Zeus might be made king, the other determined that no Zeus should rule the gods forever, he counseled the Titans, the children of Heaven and Earth to resort to subtle machinations to gain their ends, but they paid no heed to him, assuming that it was an easy thing to gain the mastery of Fate by force. His mother, Themis or the Earth prophesied to him again and again that, victory would not come to the gods who relied upon strength and violence, but only by means of guile.

As the Titans insisted upon scorning the warnings of Prometheus, he carried his mother to Zeus, who was willing to listen to the counsel, and by its means, Zeus was enabled to plunge Kronos, and all his hosts into the depths of Tartaros. But instead of being grateful to Prometheus for his help, Zeus distrusted him, not without reason, it would seem, as subsequent events prove. When Zeus ascended his father's throne, he made various gifts to the gods, dealing his empire out among

them, but "of miserable men he took no count." He even desired to sweep them off the earth and people it with a new race. Not one of the gods dared to object to this but Prometheus, and he not only saved mortals from utter ruin but he bestowed upon them the gift of hope, which prevented them from premeditating death, and above all the gift of fire by means of which they would learn many arts. To this the Okeanides reply with sympathy, but not with complete comprehension of the unbending will of Prometheus. They inquire of him if he is not aware of the fact that after all he has sinned. They grieve to think this, and wish there might be some means by which he could extricate himself from the sin. But Prometheus, with the strength of purpose that never for a moment wavers, exclaims somewhat scornfully:

"It is in truth

An easy thing to stand aloof from pain
And lavish exhortation and advice
On one vexed sorely by it. I have known
All in prevision. By my choice, my choice,
I freely sinned—I will confess my sin—
And helping mortals found my own despair."

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

He begs them to listen to the tale of the consummation of his woes, beseeching their further sympathy. The chorus listens to his exhortation and prepares to obey, but Okeanos enters just at that moment. He, also, is a sympathizer, yet one who believes it would be better to bow to the will of Zeus. He even offers to intercede with Zeus in behalf of Prometheus, at which piece of purposed kindness Prometheus with much sarcasm remarks:

“ I gratulate thee who hast shared and dared
All things with me, except their penalty.
Enough so! leave these thoughts. It cannot be
That thou shouldst move HIM. HE may not be
moved.”

Still Okeanos insists, declaring:

“ Thy wisdom hath no power to drag me back;
Because I glory, glory, to go hence
And win for thee deliverance from thy pangs,
As a free gift from Zeus.”

Prometheus applauds this generous offer but again declares it will be useless, and reveals his own infinite kindness of nature in requesting

Okeanos to rest rather and keep himself from evil which will surely befall him, for he, Prometheus, does not wish to multiply the griefs of others, though he must himself be full of grief.

Okeanos is not equal to the strain of sympathizing with Prometheus to the extent of sharing his fate, he exclaims:

“Thy doom, Prometheus, be my teacher!”

And departs with the remark:

“Thy words drive after, as I rush before.

Lo! my four-footed bird sweeps smooth and wide
The flats of air with balanced pinions, glad
To bend his knee at home in the ocean-stall.”

The chorus reiterates its sympathy in an exquisite song, which also describes the mourning of the whole earth for Prometheus.

Chorus, First Strophe

“I moan thy fate, I moan for thee,

Prometheus! From my eyes too tender,
Drop after drop incessantly

The tears of my heart's pity render
My cheeks wet from their fountains free;

Because that Zeus, the stern and cold,
Whose law is taken from his breast,
Uplifts his sceptre manifest
Over the gods of old.

First Antistrophe

“ All the land is moaning
With a murmured plaint to-day;
All the mortal nations
Having habitations
In the holy Asia
Are a dirge intoning
For thine honor and thy brothers’;
Once majestic beyond others
In the old belief,—
Now are groaning in the groaning
Of thy deep-voiced grief.

Second Strophe

Mourn the maids inhabitant
Of the Colchian land,
Who with white, calm bosoms stand
In the battle’s roar:
Mourn the Scythian tribes that haunt
The verge of earth, Mæoti’s shore.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Second Antistrophe

“Yea! Arabia’s battle-crown,
And dwellers of the beetling town
Mount Caucasus sublimely nears—
An iron squadron thundering down
With the sharp-prowed spears.
But one other before, have I seen to remain
 By invincible pain
Bound and vanquished—one Titan! ’twas Atlas, who
 bears
In a curse from the gods, by that strength of his own
 Which he evermore wears,
The weight of the heaven on his shoulder alone,
 While he sighs up the stars;
And the tides of the ocean wail bursting their bars—
 Murmurs still the profound,
And black Hades roars up through the chasm of the
 ground,
And the fountains of pure-running rivers moan low
 In the old belief,—

Prometheus now takes up his account once more
of the deeds he has done for mortals, how being
fools before, he made them wise and true in aim
of soul. Men before he helped them, though able
to see, saw but vainly and hearing, heard not, but

like shapes in dreams had mixed all things wildly down tedious lengths of time. They did not know how to build a house with wickered sides, nor about woodcraft, but lived like silly ants in caves underneath the ground. They did not mark the approach of winter nor of flower-perfumed spring, nor of summer full of fruit, but did all things lawlessly, until Prometheus taught them how the stars rise and set in mystery, numbers, the inducer of philosophies, letters, and, beside the artificer of all things, memory. He was the first to yoke oxen in couples for the carrying of men's burdens, he joined steeds to chariots, and invented ships. Furthermore, he invented remedies that rescued men from disease who before pined and wasted for lack of drugs to cure them when they fell sick. He fixed the rules of mantic art, discerned the vision from the common dream, instructed men in vocal auguries, defined the meanings of wayside omens—flights of birds, showing which are by their nature fortunate, and which are not so, and what is the food of each, and what the hates, affections, social needs of all to one another—in fine all arts came to mortals from Pro-

metheus. Once more the Okeanides exhort him to break his fetters, but Prometheus assures them that cannot be, for the Fates and the unforgetting Furies have ordained otherwise. They are stronger even than Zeus, but what they have ordained he cannot tell at this time for only through keeping the secret can he escape his chains. The Okeanides reiterate their sympathy, but show their own abject belief in the will of Zeus and seem to question the wisdom of trying to do anything for feeble mankind, whose mortal wranglings cannot disturb the "harmony of Zeus."

The next person to appear upon the scene and add her lamentations to the general effect of woe is Io, the horned maiden. She begs Prometheus to inform her what her fate is to be. After trying to dissuade her from the desire to know it, he at last consents, but before telling it to her, the Chorus asks that she may relate her story.

The story of Io has been brought into connection with the Prometheus myth by Æschylus. She does not appear in Hesiod. In fact, until the discovery a few years ago of the lost poems of Bacchylides, there was no mention of Io in Greek

literature before Æschylus, who uses the myth though in different forms in two of his plays,¹ "The Suppliants" and "Prometheus Bound." The story was known only through Latin sources and vase paintings.

The Ode to Io by Bacchylides is interesting chiefly because of the differences between it and the treatment of the myth by Æschylus.

"A thousand paths of poesy divine are open to him who has received gifts from the Muses of Pieria, and whose songs have been clothed with worship by the dark-eyed Graces who bring the wreath.

"Weave, then, some glorious lay in Athens, the lovely and the blest, thou Cean fantasy of fair renown. A choice strain should be thine, since Caliope has given thee a meed of signal honor.

"There was a time when, by the counsels of wide-ruling Zeus most high, the heifer precious in his sight—the rosy-fingered maid born to Inachus was flying from Argus, nurse of steeds; when Argus, looking every way with tireless eyes, had been charged by the great queen, Hera of the golden

¹ See Translation by Sir Richard C. Jebb.



IO, HERMES, AND ARGUS.

robe, to keep unrelenting, sleepless ward, o'er that creature with the goodly horns. Nor could Maia's son¹ elude him in the sunlit days or in the holy nights.

"Did it befall then that the swift messenger of Zeus slew huge Argus, Earth's fierce offspring [in combat]? Or did the watcher's unending cares [close his dread eyes]; or was he lulled to rest from weary troubles by the sweet melody of the Pierian sisters?

"For me, at least, the surest path of song [is that which leads me to the end]; when Io, driven by the gadfly, reached the flower banks of Nile bearing in her womb Epaphus, child of Zeus.

"Then she brought him forth, to be glorious lord of the linen-robed folk, a prince flourishing in transcendent honor; and there she founded the mightiest race among men. From that race sprang Cadmus, son of Agenor, who in Thebes of the seven gates became father of Semele. And her son was Dionysus, inspirer of Bacchantes [king of Joyous revels] and of choruses that wear the wreath."

¹ Hermes.

In the "Prometheus" Io's story is as follows:

" I cannot choose
But trust you, nymphs, and tell you all ye ask
In clear words—though I sob amid my speech
In speaking of the storm-curse sent from Zeus.
And of my beauty, from what height it took
Its swoop on me, poor wretch! left thus deformed
And monstrous to your eyes. For evermore
Around my virgin-chamber, wandering went
The nightly visions which entreated me
With syllabled smooth sweetness—'Blessed maid,
Why lengthen out thy maiden hours when fate
Permits the noblest spousal in the world?
When Zeus burns with the arrow of thy love
And fain would touch thy beauty? Maiden, thou
Despise not Zeus! depart to Lerné's mead
That's green around thy father's flocks and stalls,
Until the passion of the heavenly Eye
Be quenched in sight.' Such dreams did all night long
Constrain me—me, unhappy!—till I dared
To tell my father how they trod the dark
With visionary steps. Whereat he sent
His frequent heralds to the Pythian fane,
And also to Dodona, and inquired
How best, by act or speech, to please the gods.
The same returning brought back oracles
Of doubtful sense, indefinite response,

Dark to interpret; but at last there came
 To Inachus an answer that was clear,
 Thrown straight as any bolt, and spoken out—
 This—‘ he should drive me from my home and land,
 And bid me wander to the extreme verge
 Of all the earth—or, if he willed it not,
 Should have a thunder with a fiery eye
 Leap straight from Zeus to burn up all his race
 To the last root of it.’ By which Loxian word
 Subdued, he drove me forth and shut me out,
 He loth, me loth—but Zeus’s violent bit
 Compelled him to the deed: when instantly
 My body and soul were changèd and distraught,
 And, hornèd as ye see, and spurred along
 By the fanged insect,¹ with a maniac leap
 I rushed on to Cenchrea’s limpid stream
 And Lerné’s fountain-water. There, the earth-born,
 The herdsman Argus, most immitigable
 Of wrath, did find me out, and track me out
 With countless eyes set staring at my steps:
 And though an unexpected sudden doom
 Drew him from life, I, curse-tormented still,
 Am driven from land to land before the scourge
 The gods hold o’er me. So thou hast heard the past,
 And if a bitter future thou canst tell,
 Speak on.”

¹ Gadfly.

The remainder of Io's story is told in prophecy by Prometheus. He describes how she shall wander over many parts of the earth and at last come to Egypt, where Zeus shall finally give back to her her perfect mind, and by the gentle touch of his hand she shall bring forth a child who shall be called Epaphus. After five generations, a fair woman-race of fifty daughters¹ shall unwillingly flee back to Argos to escape nuptials with their father's fifty brothers; all but one of these daughters will murder her husband, but one is overcome by love, and chooses the lesser evil of marriage with a near relation to murder. From that bride will come a royal race in Argos, one of whose descendants, Herakles, shall loose the bonds of Prometheus. Thus, a relationship between the two stories is brought about. Prometheus, continuing his vein of prophecy, declares that Zeus shall in the future prepare a marriage rite for himself which shall anon thrust him headlong from his great seat down the "abysmal void," and so shall be fulfilled the curse his father Kronos muttered in his fall. And from this fate there can

¹ The fifty daughters of Danaus.

be no escape unless Prometheus shall tell him the means. "And Zeus," he concludes, "precipitated thus, shall learn, at length, the difference betwixt rule and servitude." The Chorus asks him if he is not afraid to utter such words, lest Zeus send upon him greater woe, and suggests that it would be wise to show more reverence to Zeus. Again Prometheus breaks out in scorn at such craven counsel:

"Reverence thou,
Adore thou, flatter thou, whomever reigns,
Whenever reigning! but for me, your Zeus
Is less than nothing. Let him act and reign
His brief hour out according to his will—
He will not, therefore, rule the gods too long."

Now, Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, arrives and a spicy conversation ensues between this upstart servant, as Prometheus hints he is, of the new gods and the lover of mankind. Hermes is sent to inquire what marriage rite it is that shall be the means of Zeus's fall from empire. Prometheus declares he will never reveal the secret, no matter what the penalty before Zeus releases him from his pangs.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Hermes, finding that nothing he can say will move Prometheus to the least degree, hurls upon him the further punishments of Zeus.

“The Father will split up this jut of rock
With the great thunder and the bolted flame,
And hide thy body where a hinge of stone
Shall catch it like an arm; and when thou hast passed
A long black time within, thou shalt come out
To front the sun while Zeus’s winged hound,
The strong carnivorous eagle, shall wheel down
To meet thee, self-called to a daily feast,
And set his fierce beak in thee and tear off
The long rags of thy flesh and batten deep
Upon thy dusky liver.”

Prometheus remains unmoved; the Chorus begs that he act the part of wisdom and yield to Zeus. Hermes warns the Chorus to leave lest it be blasted to idiocy by the coming thunders. Upon hearing this threat the Okeanides finally rise to the occasion; they cast in their lot with Prometheus.

“I choose, with this victim, this anguish foretold!
I recoil from the traitor in hate and disdain,
And I know that the curse of the treason is worse
Than the pang of the chain.”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Other short versions of the myth occur in Latin writers, with slight variations in the main points. For example, Appolodorus says:

“Prometheus, having formed from water and earth mankind, unknown to Jove, he stealthily brought fire in a fennel stalk which, when Jove discovered, he ordered Vulcan to bind his body to a mountain of the Caucasus. This, in truth, is a mountain in Scythia, where Prometheus transfixed with a nail and bound endured for many years. Moreover, an eagle, daily flying down, with wolves’ teeth devoured his entrails, which grew again at night. Here, then, on account of the theft of fire, Prometheus yielded up to punishment until that time when Hercules should liberate him from his chains.”

Hyginus gives this account in one of his fables:

“Formerly men sought fire from the Immortals, and they did not know how to preserve it perpetually. But afterwards Prometheus brought it to earth in a fennel stalk and showed men how to preserve and cover the ashes. On account of this Mercury commanded by Jove, bound him fast in Mount Caucasus to a rock, with an iron nail, and sent upon him an eagle which

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

devoured his heart. As much as he devoured by day, so much grew up again at night. After thirty years Hercules slew this eagle and liberated him."

A myth so all-inclusive as the Prometheus myth offers many interesting problems of origin to the scientific student of mythology, as well as furnishing fascinating material to the symbolical and philosophical interpreters of myths, and perennially fresh "stuff" for poets to make their "dreams on." Prometheus belongs to the large family of culture heroes, who exist in all mythologies of the human race. These interesting personages are always represented as the teachers of the arts of civilization to mankind, and often as the creators or makers of mankind as Prometheus is in some of the later versions of the story. It is not unusual for the culture hero in very primitive myths to be a bird or an animal. Finding themselves possessed of a certain amount of knowledge, "the slow increase of an advancing toil," primitive men set up a hero among fishes or birds or men to whom they liked to think they owed everything, just as some people now like to set up

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

India as the culture-hero among nations, and trace all the fruits of civilization enjoyed to-day to an ultimate origin in that land of mysterious beginnings.

It is in relation to its origin as a fire-myth that the most ingenious theories have been invented. The great German philologist, Kuhn, has let his imagination run riot in framing a hypothesis in which nature and philology are made to dovetail in so seemingly solid a manner that if it is not true, it is even better than true, and might be called a scientific fairy tale. According to him—fire must have been given in the earliest times to man by nature. There was a burning here and there and man came to know fire and its effects by experience. At the same time he learned how to keep it from going out, and probably he very soon learned also how to produce it. The earliest method of producing fire was by means of two sticks. With one stick primitive man bored into a groove in the other stick or into a circular disc of wood. But he saw besides fire in the sky and believed it to be of the same nature. Its origin must have been similar. There was no lack of necessary wood

in the sky, for there was seen in the configuration of the clouds the great ash-tree of the world. It was supposed that the lightning fell down from this ash-tree, against which a branch twined round it had rubbed until fire was produced in the same way as it was on the earth. Then they saw how fire fell down in the lightning and called it a divine eagle, hawk or woodpecker. Originally, the bird was probably regarded as being itself the lightning. Afterwards it was thought that the bird, which at first perched upon the heavenly ash that produced the fire, brought the fire down from the tree to the earth. After a while the lightning bird became changed into a lightning god, who brought fire and man to earth in the lightning. The Hindoo god of fire, Agni, was often called the golden winged bird. When the divine beings were once thought of as persons, men no longer imagined the fire in the sky to be self-originated on the world tree but regarded it as produced by the gods, who acted in the same manner as the men on earth. The most striking peculiarity of fire was the necessity of constantly kindling it afresh. The Hindoos expressed this

by saying that the god of fire, Agni, had hidden himself in a cave, as they probably conceived of the fire as hidden in the wood. The cave of the fire god is, of course, the storm cloud in the sky, and what brings back the fire but the lightning streak which bores into the cloud as the stick into the disc. The boring process was called in India *Manthana*, from the root *math*, "I shake, rub, or produce by rubbing." Then the fire-generating stick was called first *matha* and later *pramantha*, and *pramantha* being related to a verb which came to have the signification "to tear off, snatch to oneself, rob," the fetching back of the god of fire came to be called a robbery of fire. The gods had intended for some reason or other to withhold fire from men; a benefactor of mankind stole it from the gods, and so we reach Prometheus, the robber of fire, for this robbery was called *pramâtha*. No *pramâtha-s* is he who loves boring or robbing and from the latter word is formed the Greek word Prometheus.¹ With a little more scholarly, philological juggling Prometheus came to have

¹ See Steinthal's Essay on Kuhn's theory in Goldziher's "Mythology of the Hebrews."

to the Greeks the significance of the fore-knower.

As students of philology frequently differ in the tracing of language relationships, it is wise on the part of the layman not to believe too implicitly in such a perfect hypothesis as this of Kuhn's. Andrew Lang finds much that is fanciful in it, and gives many interesting arguments to prove that the notion of stealing fire came from the actual experiences of primitive men, who, on account of the difficulty in kindling fire, were in the habit of stealing it from their enemies whenever they needed it. The reflection of this custom in a cosmic myth of the lightning and the clouds would account for such a myth as that of Prometheus without aid from philology at all, though the name might have such a philological origin as Kuhn has suggested.

According to Pausanias there was in a street in Panopeus, a building of unbaked brick of no great size, and in it a statue of Pentelican marble which, some say, is Æsculapius and others Prometheus. The last adduce the following to confirm their opinion. Some stones lie near the ravine, each



PROMETHEUS BRINGING FIRE FROM HEAVEN. (MAX KLINGER.)

Reproduced by permission of Mr. Hugo Reisinger and the authorities of the *Copley Society* from an etching in the German Exhibition.

large enough to fill a cart, in color like the clay found in ravines and sandy torrents and they smell very like the human body. They say that these are remains of the clay out of which the human race was fashioned by Prometheus.

The rebellious god has also figured as a historical personage who raised the first altar to the gods, and constructed the first ship. He was supposed to have lived at the time of the deluge. He was the planter of the vine and inventor of the plough. The Colchians worshipped him as a deity. There was said to be a temple to him on Mt. Caucasus. Curiously enough the device on the portal was Egyptian: an eagle over a heart. The eagle and vulture were the insignia of the country, and the heart, the centre of vital heat, was an emblem of the Sun.

Light is thrown upon the story as told in Hesiod through an inquiry into the history of burnt offerings.¹ It seems that the most ancient whole burnt offerings of the Greeks dwindled to burning for the gods only the bones and fat of the ox, while the worshippers feasted themselves upon the meat.

¹ See E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture."

It occurred to many nations to economize in their sacrifices. Ingenious devices arose for lightening the burden of the worshipper without affecting the efficacy of the sacrifice. Some of these were to give a part for the whole, to sacrifice brazen statues for human victims, or victim animals in meal and butter, cakes of dough or wax in the figures of the beasts for which they were presented. The real point at issue, then, between Prometheus and Zeus must have been the economizing in the sacrifice, so Prometheus appears as the helper of men in this particular also.

A closer inquiry into the changes and additions made by Æschylus makes evident how great a development there was in the spiritual content of the myth from the days of Hesiod. The source whence the Greek dramatists derived their mythology was twofold. In the poets from Homer and Hesiod onward was preserved a recognized mythological system which came to have an orthodox religious significance. But to the various shrines in Greece were attached local legends, from which the earliest poets had in the first instance drawn. Thither the later poets went also for inspiration.

It is evident that Æschylus must have found some of his material among these local legends since no antecedent poet furnishes him with the legend complete as it appears in his great drama. Several interesting examples of the influencing of the Hesiodic account by a local legend may be traced. For example, in Hesiod, Prometheus is said to be the son of Iäpetus, one of the twelve Titans and Klymene, a daughter of Okeanos. Æschylus makes him simply a son of Gaia, the Earth, which was also identified with Themis. Gaia and Themis are distinct goddesses in Hesiod, but they were worshipped at Athens as one deity, Ge-Themis. In this departure from Hesiod, Æschylus was therefore supported by local tradition. If any justification were needed for this variation from the authority of Hesiod, the gain poetically would be a sufficient one. How much more fitting it is that Prometheus, the embodiment of all wisdom, should have as his sole parent the earth-goddess; she who has ever typified the wise, universal mother! How the ideas of the earth-goddess and Themis, the goddess of Justice, came to coalesce has been interestingly explained by Ed-

wyn R. Bevan.¹ Themis was not primarily the goddess of Justice but an oracular power. At Delphi, the local myth knew of a time, when the oracle was that of Themis not of Apollo, and of a still earlier time when it belonged to Gaia. Themis and Gaia were not identified at Delphi as they were at Athens, but they were closely associated as oracular powers. Themis is the daughter and successor of Gaia. According to a common Greek idea it was out of the earth that prophetic inspiration and dreams mainly came. Not only Gaia, herself, but other earth deities, gave men good counsel in oracle and vision. Even the Pythoness at Delphi was inspired by a vapor arising out of the ground. In Hesiod, Gaia, as the giver of good advice, plays an important part. She seems to have been the moving spirit in all important actions. She prompted Kronos in the deed by means of which he accomplished the overthrow of his father Uranos. She and Uranos foretold Kronos of his own doom, and revealed to Rhea how the infant Zeus was to be preserved from the progeny-devouring jaws of his father.

¹ Introduction to Translation of "Prometheus Bound."

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Through her "sage instructions" Kronos was compelled to disgorge his children. Her admonishings helped Zeus to win his final victory, for she told the gods everything from beginning to end. Finally she and Uranos saved Zeus from doing that which would bring about his own overthrow.

There is a poetic link, however, between Hesiod and Æschylus in Pindar, which gives one more step toward the unfolding of the idea as it finally appears in Æschylus. In one of Pindar's Isthmian Odes, Themis plays the part given in Hesiod to Gaia. According to this version Zeus is restrained from doing the fatal thing by Themis, who is called the expounder of oracles. A last touch of symbolism is added by Æschylus when he makes the oracular mother, Themis, unable to speak except through the mouth of her son, Prometheus. He alone can tell Zeus the peril which hangs over his head and how it may be removed.

The notion that Zeus is one day to be overthrown as his father and grandfather had been before him appears in Hesiod, though in a very different form from the story as told in Æschylus,

and not connected in any way with the Prometheus story. In Hesiod it is Metis, the first wife of Zeus, who is to give birth to the future ruler. Being warned in time by Gaia and Uranos, Zeus swallows Metis. For thus they persuaded him, lest other of the everliving gods should possess sovereign honor in the room of Jove. For of her it was fated that wise children should be born: first, the glancing-eyed Tritonian maiden, having equal might and prudent counsel with her sire; and then, I ween, she was going to give birth to a son, as king of gods and men, with an overbearing spirit. This little tragedy ends, as Apollodorus relates, with the birth of a daughter Athênê, who sprang fully armed from her father's head, symbolic, as some mythologists say, of the sudden flash of the dawn in the morning sky. Pindar relates that it is Thetis the Nereid who is destined to bear a royal son better than his father. Zeus and Poseidon contend for her, not knowing how the matter stands, and again it is Themis who declares the peril, and Thetis is married to Peleus.

The friendliness of Hephaistos for Prometheus is natural. They were both fire-gods and in the

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Attic worship were closely associated, having many things in common and being worshipped together. On the other hand, the brother and sister, Force and Strength, the children of the river Styx, came to the aid of Zeus against the Titans, as related in Hesiod, and ever after remained by his side.

Mr. Bevan is of the opinion that Okeanos is brought into the play for two main reasons. "In the first place he marks the scene of the action—at the extreme verge of the earth, round which revolves the circular, all-encompassing river, whose name he bears. And the same purpose is served by making the Chorus consist of his daughters. Their visible presence in itself brings home to the spectator how very far away the place is. But, secondly, Okeanos is morally the foil to Prometheus. Both belong to the old race of gods and just because they do, the personal contrast of the two is exhibited in sharper relief. There were two main elements in the traditional idea of Okeanos. One was his immense age. According to Homer, he was the beginning of all things. In Hesiod he does not hold quite so primal a position,

being himself the son of Uranos and Gaia, but the idea of great age, no doubt, clung to him in popular thought. The other element was his remoteness, not only local, but involving the moral quality of holding aloof. This conception of Okeanos gives to much in the play of Æschylus a point which the contemporary Athenians would readily seize. His first words are to complain of the length of his journey, although we know that the scene is laid close to his river. The journey was long in regard to the effort it cost him to move. He was full of senile apprehension even at his daughters going to visit Prometheus and was only with difficulty persuaded to consent."

The elements of the myth left out by Æschylus are equally important in their bearing upon the artistic and symbolical purpose of the poet. The story, as told by Hesiod, has seven important divisions. First, the arousing of the wrath of Zeus against Prometheus on account of the cheat perpetrated by Prometheus in the sacrifice. Second, Zeus, ever mindful of the fraud, deprived men of the strength of fire. Third, the stealing of fire by Prometheus. Fourth, the wrath of Zeus when he

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

saw mortals enjoying fire and his punishment of them by the gift of Pandora. Sixth, his punishment of Prometheus. Seventh, he, for the glory of his son Herakles, permitted him to slay the eagle and release Prometheus. Æschylus leaves out the episode of the sacrifice, and describes the wrath of Zeus as due to the fact that Prometheus befriended mankind when the King of gods and men desired in hatred to them, to sweep them off the face of the earth. The Prometheus of Æschylus not only steals fire for mortals but teaches them absolutely all the arts of civilization. The anger of Zeus is not emphasized by the baneful gift of Pandora. In place of Pandora saving hope for mankind by shutting down the lid of the jar containing the evils which, be it remembered, she does at the instigation of Zeus, Prometheus is the giver of hope, also. Implacable a god as the Zeus of Hesiod is, this quality has been intensified in every possible way by the later poet. By this means is brought into sharper contrast the god who succors mankind, and who, by the exercise of infinite will, chooses to suffer unspeakable torments at the hands of the all-powerful ruling god rather

than to make any compromise with his lofty ideal.

Furthermore, the bringing of the Io myth into relationship with the Prometheus myth and the leaving out of the Pandora myth is full of significance. Instead of womanhood, a bane to mankind as Hesiod presents her, Æschylus shows us womanhood outraged through the selfish desire of supreme power. Whether it was the conscious intention of Æschylus or not, by this means is made conspicuous the suffering of woman on account of her sex, when force was still the only ruling power in the consciousness of man—in those days when wives were captured not wooed, a celebrated example of which in Roman history was the rape of the Sabine women. It is an interesting circumstance that Æschylus has minimized as much as possible the part played by Hera in the persecution of Io, and has subtly suggested that her sufferings were due to the selfish indifference of Zeus, who made no effort to relieve them. He is spoken of as the author of Io's miseries and reproached with causing them.

The transformation of Io into a heifer is vari-

ously accounted for in the different versions of the story. According to one version, Zeus metamorphosed her into a heifer in order to elude the jealousy of Hera; in another, it was Hera who caused the transformation in order to conceal her from Zeus. In the "Suppliants" Æschylus chooses the latter view but in "Prometheus" the point is left vague. Io merely says the transformation was wrought by no earthly power.

If Okeanos is the foil to Prometheus, Io may be regarded as the complement to Prometheus. She rounds out fully the symbol of humanity suffering, in the toils of savage, remorseless, natural forces before "hope and love" had made mankind "man."

An important variation in the Io myth said to be introduced by Æschylus is the representing of Io as a horned maiden instead of as a heifer. At least, the fact that on vase paintings before the time of Æschylus, Io appeared as a heifer, and on vase paintings after Æschylus, as a horned maiden, seems to furnish undeniable proof of this, though according to one commentator, the word in Bacchylides for Io might be translated simply "the

horned one." If the change was wholly due to Æschylus, it is easy to see that it was required for artistic purposes. A heifer conversing with Prometheus would certainly have spoiled the dignity of the scene, besides the myth in some of its versions states that Io could not speak after her transformation, and was obliged to write her name with her hoofs in the sand in order to make herself known to her father. Talking animals are not characteristic of Greek mythology. They belong to the earlier animistic conception of nature, only an occasional survival of which—like the speech of the horses of Achilles in the *Iliad* is to be met with; and these, it will be remembered, were inspired with speech by Hera.

There were various accounts of the manner in which Argus was slain. In some, Hermes is described as attacking Argus openly, in others, he is said to have first been sent to sleep. In the older and simpler myths all the eyes of Argus were sleepless. Euripides was the first to represent them as watching by relays, and he is followed by Ovid, who tells in his version of the story how Hermes disguised himself as a shepherd and lulled

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Argus to sleep by playing on the Syrinx. While some of the watchers' eyes were closed by the music, others remained open, but finally Hermes won his victory by putting all the eyes of Argus to sleep with the charming story of the invention of the musical instrument, the Syrinx—the tale of Pan and his love for the Nymph of that name. After this, Hermes deepens the slumber by waving his charmed wand over the sleeper's face. In the Ode, already given, Bacchylides is uncertain:

“ Did it befall then that the swift messenger of Zeus slew huge Argus, Earth's fierce offspring? Or did the watchers' unending cares [close his dread eyes]; or was he lulled to rest from weary troubles by the sweet melody of the Pierian sisters? ”

It is evident that he knew several versions of the story. There being nothing to gain by definite details here, Æschylus wisely leaves the point open, and simply relates that an unexpected sudden doom drove him from life.

Io has been identified with the Egyptian Goddess Isis, and the myth has been interpreted as one of the moon, while the hundred-eyed Argus is the

starry night. Hermes, the wind god, then figures as the gentle breeze of dawn which puts the stars to sleep with its music. The idea is lovely enough to make us hope the interpretation correct. Any-one who has observed the peculiar friskiness of cows on moonlight nights, will not be surprised that primitive cow-herds might believe some strange affinity existed between these animals and the serene orb which sails so far above them in the summer skies. They do not exactly jump over the moon as the nursery rhyme describes, but they do jump bars, and go off on independent rambles to the consternation of the farmer, when the moon rides full in the sky. Why may not this myth have originated in the worship of cows, certainly a distinctive feature of Egyptian worship, and not unknown in Greek worship? Since imagination is a chief factor in the interpretation of myth, we shall be quite justified in the conjecture that the worship of cows might have been transferred to the moon, which has a noticeable effect upon them suggesting some special relationship between them and the moon. Then would arise stories of metamorphoses, then

romances to explain these, leading finally to such poetic tragedies as that of Io.

It has been a subject of wonder to many that Æschylus should have dared to represent to a pious Athenian audience so uncompromising a rebel against established religion as Prometheus.

Among the solutions suggested of this problem, Professor Royce, of Harvard, has elaborated one which has much to recommend it. After pointing out distinctions between the legendary deities of Greece and the Greek ideal of supreme deity, he writes: "Now it is in his capacity of protector, avenger of wrongs, august lord of what is grand in Nature that the Greek worships Zeus.

"But if a legend is mentioned which is degrading to the character of the Supreme, the vivacious votary of the gods takes it up, relates it, dwells upon it, believes it to be the actual fact perhaps, but never imagines that he is doing any violence to the Supreme whom he really does worship by narrating or believing such things of the legendary deity of the same name, never, in fact, thinks of the being in the legend as the same with the Supreme, but enjoys the story as to the one, and

reverently bows in worship to the other, and goes his way without inquiring as to his own consistency." He goes on to say that a Greek "with the keenness of thought of one of the later philosophers could not have done this. The latter were inclined to banish the mythology altogether because it was so inconsistent, or to allegorize it because it was so beautiful." But to one of the audience of Æschylus, he is convinced that the condition of mind described was native and undisturbed. "If you attracted him by a beautiful ideal you could arouse what feelings you desired against whomsoever you would, provided that you did not make him think that you were attacking the fundamental Ideas which he worshipped or the faith that was part of him and you would never offend his piety. And besides all that, you could, as the comedians did, make sport of every name in the Pantheon, and he would never feel aggrieved, simply because to his simple mind, what you were attacking was not what he worshipped."

Perhaps we need hardly go back to the simple mind of the Greek to understand this, for who to-day enjoys a joke in which figure Old Testament

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

characters better than a clergyman! Doubtless, Professor Royce has rightly analyzed the attitude of devout Athenians, but while such an attitude may not represent the decay of religious feeling, it certainly does indicate that the superstitions of their religion were falling away from them, and also that a poet of the intellectual and artistic power of Æschylus with absolutely conscious purpose constructed a play in which he embodied the loftiest philosophy of which he was capable. From the idea of Fate which over-ruled all things, even the doings of the gods, he could not free himself. No Greek could, any more than a modern can free himself from the idea of an endless chain of cause and effect. But just as the modern mind will fit its moral and social ideals into a system of development wherein cause and effect will have full play, so the mind of Æschylus tried to fit his hero of social regeneration into a system of thought where Fate should still have full play. Zeus, the ruler by force in which cruelty and selfishness and hatred have unrebuked sway is defied by Prometheus, who sets intellect and aspiration, or knowledge and hope up against the rule of force,

because he loves instead of hates. Poet and audience alike must have seen how much superior for mankind was the position of Prometheus over that of Zeus. But Zeus is in the hands of Fate and Fate has decreed that his kingdom is to be saved to him. Prometheus alone knows the secret which will save his kingdom. The coming history of the gods is not to consist in the transference of force from one dynasty to the next, but in the coöperation of force with the powers of the intellect and heart. Zeus will finally free Prometheus, and Prometheus will aid Zeus to retain his kingdom by telling him the secret which, whatever form it may have taken mythologically in the third play of the trilogy "Prometheus Unbound," must symbolically have signified the same idea as the Bible expresses in the phrase "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together." Force will no longer be brute strength, but force tempered by intellect and love. Mankind will no longer fight in fear against nature, but shall subdue nature to become the helper of its needs. How true a picture this is of the history of one phase of civilization need not be said, and how much of this very

history could be written in the story of the multifarious developments in the uses of fire is also self evident, from the spark kindled by the fire drill that warmed the primitive savage and cooked his food, to the spark kindled by the great dynamo that warms, cooks, lights, talks for, transports and even furnishes music in every large city to-day. This is the history of fire in its practical bearings upon civilization. But the flames of fire ascend and become symbolic of the artistic and spiritual aspiration of mankind. Æschylus carries the idea forward to this point by making Prometheus the inventor of art, science and thought. How much the events of the Persian war may have influenced Æschylus in the modeling of his Prometheus, it is impossible to say. The idea of national freedom filled the air, and it is probable that the stubborn Titan's defiance of his foe struck a sympathetic chord in many an Athenian's heart. This, however, is a mere point in the larger, more universal artistic expression of the Democratic ideal in so far as it had then been evolved in the Greek mind.

THE PROMETHEUS MYTH FROM
HESIOD TO SHELLEY

II

The Prometheus Myth from Hesiod to Shelley

POETIC TREATMENT OF THE MYTH IN SHELLEY AND OTHER MODERN POETS

STUBBORN a rebel as Prometheus is against the established Olympian autocracy, as portrayed by Æschylus, the old ideals still exert themselves. The god of compassion is not yet to conquer the god of enmity. Destiny, alone, working through the will of Zeus shall untold ages hence bring about the release of Prometheus. In the meantime, he suffers the unspeakable tortures hurled upon him by Zeus, and the play ends as it began with Prometheus in chains.

In the portrayal of his Prometheus, Æschylus created a type which has made its philosophical appeal to thoughtful poets of every nationality. As George E. Woodberry expresses it, "The ques-

tion the race asks in this myth is, 'What is most divine in me? What is the god in me?'" and each poet answers the question according to his own vision of what is the greatest possible good to be desired for humanity. Among the writers who have touched upon it in their verse or elaborated it as the subject matter of a poem or drama the most distinguished have been the great Spanish poet, Calderon, the Italian, Monti, the Germans, Herder, Schlegel and Goethe, the Frenchmen, Voltaire, Victor Hugo and Edgar Quinet. More than one English poet, also, felt the spell of the great Titan upon them. Byron declared that its influence had passed into all he had done, and though he did not choose it as a subject, no one can read his poem of "Manfred" without feeling that it has literally been illuminated by the Promethean spark. The most marvelous treatment of all, however, is in Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound." It alone is worthy to companion its wonderful Greek prototype, taking its place among the greatest poems in literature.

Though modelled at the beginning closely upon the drama of Æschylus, it soon branches off into

realms of imaginative splendor nowhere approached by the Greek poet. The strength of Æschylus is centred upon the portrayal of the character of Prometheus, so full of godlike power, and of human pathos, while in Shelley, we see the effects of the freeing of Prometheus upon the mind and spirit of man and the universe expressed in symbols, so varied and exquisite as almost to exhaust the possibilities of human language.

The play opens like the Greek play with Prometheus in chains in the Indian Caucasus. But though he suffers the punishments of Zeus, and is equally defiant of his power, there is one marked difference in his attitude. He does not hate Zeus. He has even repented of the curse he uttered against the god. His memory of it has faded, but he would now recall it in order to repudiate it and asks of Nature to repeat his words to him.

“Ye Mountains,

Whose many-voiced Echoes through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Through which the Sun walks burning with beams!
And ye swift whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak."

Voices from the Mountains, Springs, Air and Whirlwinds recall the horror which fell upon nature and man when the curse was first uttered, the Earth, mother of Prometheus as in the Greek play—adding her recollections to those of the others.

"The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery'."

None tells him the curse, however, for as his mother, Earth, explains to him he cannot hear it. The tongue in which it can be spoken is known only to those who die, and Prometheus is immortal.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Once more he begs his mother, Earth, to let him hear again his own words; and now she tells him there is one way in which it may be accomplished:

“For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live,
Till death unite them and they part no more,
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin,
Have sprung and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Prometheus, desiring that no evil shall ever again pass his lips or those of anything resembling him, calls upon the phantasm of Jupiter to appear. Now for the first time speak the Oceanides who watch by his side and comfort him, as in the Greek play, but instead of a whole chorus of Oceanides, speaking as one person, according to the Greek manner of portraying a dramatic chorus, there are but two, Ione and Panthea, sisters of a third, Asia, who is the beloved of Prometheus, and to whom, after ages of separation, he is finally to be united. Thus, in Shelley's play, the Oceanides each have individual and important parts to play. Here, their part is to be the first to perceive the phantasm of Jupiter. As it approaches, Ione says:

“ My wings are folded o'er mine ears;
 My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes;
Yet through their silver shade appears,
 And through their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds.
 May it be no ill to thee,
O, thou of many wounds!
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
 Ever thus we watch and wake.”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Panthea says:

“ The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful, like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold,
To stay steps proud, o’er the slow cloud,
His veined hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.”

When the phantasm of Jupiter has finished repeating the curse which Prometheus had uttered, to the great consternation of Earth, Prometheus exclaims:

“ It doth repent me; words are quick and vain;
Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.”

Earth and the Echoes do not see the strength of the ground Prometheus has now taken. Wailingly the Earth cries:

“ Misery, oh, misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee!
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth’s rent heart shall answer ye!

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and van-
quishèd!"

Ione, though not seeing the true bearing of the pity which has arisen in the heart of Prometheus, does not waver in her faithfulness toward him. "Fear not": 'tis some passing spasm, the Titan is unvanquished still," she says, and at the same moment, perceives Mercury "trampling the slant winds on high," on his way to Prometheus from Jupiter. Following come troops of Furies, "Jove's tempest-walking hounds," ready to bring torments upon Prometheus at the command of Jove. Mercury, unlike the Hermes of Æschylus, is the friend of Prometheus. He is a sympathizer, and like the Okeanides and Okeanos in the Greek play, he attempts to persuade Prometheus of the futility of his trying to hold out against the superior power of Jupiter:

"Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps,
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task."

He makes every effort, like Hermes in the Greek play, to persuade Prometheus to divulge the secret which shall transfer the sceptre of Jupiter to some other power, but nothing can shake the purpose of the Titan—neither the prospect of slow years spent in torture, nor the reward which might be his should he comply, to "dwell among the Gods the while, lapped in voluptuous joy." Prometheus replies:

"I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains."

And Mercury replies:

"Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee."

And Prometheus:

"Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned. How vain is talk!
Call up the fiends."

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The Furies appear, and inflict their utmost upon Prometheus—tortures, not of a physical nature, but of the mind. They bring to his inner vision the evil of the soul of mankind and the calamities that befall men in consequence of the evil. The tragedy of historical Christianity is touched upon and also the tragedy of the French Revolution; ideals originating in love, but ending in hate. The climax is reached in the final speech of one of the Furies:

“In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged; the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true.
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man’s estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want; worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt; they know not what to do.”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Over this dismal picture of the general depravity of mankind Prometheus triumphs through his infinite pity:

“Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.”

At which the Fury vanishes with the words,—

Thou pitiest them? I speak no more.”

and Prometheus continues to suffer and endure:

“Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain, ever, forever!

I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear

Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,

Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.

The grave hides all things beautiful and good.

I am a God and cannot find it there,

Nor would I seek it; for, though dread revenge,

This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.

The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul

With new endurance, till the hour arrives

When they shall be no types of things that are.”

To Panthea's question, “What sawest thou?”
he answers in a mood recalling that of Æschylus's

hero, when he declared that to tell of his sufferings would be torture:

“ There are two woes—
To speak and to behold; thou spare me one.”

But, like the earlier hero, he does speak of his woes though not at length. He gives but a shadow of the truth he saw:

“ Names are there, Nature’s sacred watchwords, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, Liberty, and Love!
Suddenly, fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them; there was strife, deceit, and fear;
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.”

Suddenly now, a better state of affairs dawns for Prometheus. Earth calls up the spirits dwelling in the dim caves of thought, who are able to behold the future. These radiant spirits prophesy of a time when Justice, Love and Peace shall reign. Four spirits, each give an episode, illustrating the hope of love to blossom one day in fullness. The first has fled on a battle-trumpet’s blast from a battle in which were mingled the

cries of "Freedom, Hope, Death, Victory"; the second, from a foundering ship has speeded on the sigh of one who gave an enemy his plank, and himself plunged to death; the third comes on the dream of a sage; the fourth, sleeping on a poet's lips was awakened by one of his imaginative creations and sped to the succor of Prometheus. Then come from the east and the west two more spirits, symbolic of Love. Though Love, these spirits reveal, is still but a dream, from which Prometheus wakes to find the shadow, pain; the chorus of all the spirits is reassuring:

"Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul, and fair,
Like a tempest through the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb."

Prometheus, cheered by these air-born shapes, feels that all hope is vain but love. He thinks of his beloved Asia, so long separated from him, and

seems, for the first time, almost overcome with grief. He would fain be what it is his destiny to be:

“The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things.
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.”

Panthea reminds him that she ever watches beside him, and he recognizes love in this devotion, and that possessing this, there is hope; and again Panthea reminds him that Asia awaits in the far Indian vale where she is exiled. Rugged and desolate in the past this vale is now becoming lovely with fair flowers and herbs. It is haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow among the woods and waters, from the ether of Asia's transforming presence. This, however, would fade if it were not to be mingled with that of Prometheus. The symbolism here is of nature revived by Spring, the nymph Asia, being a commingling of the two ideas of a nature goddess and of Venus, offspring of the sea and goddess of love. Panthea now leaves Prometheus to seek her sister

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Asia, whom she finds alone, early in the morning, in the lovely Indian vale. Asia welcomes Panthea, whom she is awaiting and whom she calls:

“ Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live.”

Panthea now describes wondrous sensations which came to her at the unfolding of a great love in the being of Prometheus. They came to her as the experiences of a dream:

“ With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep.
Then two dreams came. One I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
‘ Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.’
I lifted them; the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o’er

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Streamed forth like vaporous fire—an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
And like the vapors when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody; thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; though still
I listened through the night when sound was none.”

She describes, too, how Ione felt the awakening of humanity to love. Asia, listening to Panthea, yet exclaims that her words are as air, that she feels them not. “Oh, lift Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!” Asia gazes into Panthea’s eyes and beholds a shade, a shape:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ ’tis He, arrayed

In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread

Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.

Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!

Say not those smiles that we shall meet again

Within that bright pavilion which their beams

Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.”

Then Asia sees in the eyes of Panthea the shadow of her other forgotten dream, which takes shape in Panthea’s mind—a dream wherein she saw stamped upon all the leaves the words “Oh, Follow, Follow!” This calls to Asia’s mind a dream of her own in which she saw written on the shadows of the morning clouds and athwart the purple mountain slope, “Follow, oh, Follow!” Low, sweet, faint sounds were also heard saying, Oh, Follow, Follow, Follow Me!” and in the dream she looked into the depths of Panthea’s eyes and still she saw there, “Follow, Follow.” The Echoes now take up this refrain and from every side is heard, “Oh, Follow, Follow!” Addressing Asia, they sing:

“Oh, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew;
By the forests, lakes and fountains,
Through the many folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean!"

Asia and Panthea link hands and follow the voices into a forest intermingled with rocks and caverns, while other spirits sing songs descriptive of their way amidst these wilds of nature and of the love which is awakening everywhere in nature. The music is heard by the fauns which inhabit the wilds, though whence it comes they know not. They have music of their own, too, for Silenus is wont to sing to them wise and lovely songs:

"Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love and the chained Titan's woful doom,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood."

Asia and Panthea at last arrive at a pinnacle of rocks among mountains whither the sound has

borne them. It is the realm of Demogorgon, Shelley's symbol for eternity, or perhaps more properly, the persistent march of events. From this height they are gazing upon the beautiful scene spread beneath them, when they see more spirits, with golden locks and beckoning smiles. Their song calls them down, down to the cave of Demogorgon:

“ A mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline.”

With Demogorgon, Asia holds converse upon the deep problems of existence. She gives the account of the successive rulers of Heaven, and the history of the part played by Prometheus in succoring and instructing mankind—not very differently from the way Prometheus himself describes it in the Greek play, except that in this play Jupiter is wholly indebted to Prometheus for his power. He gave him wisdom which is strength:

“ And with this law alone, ‘ Let man be free,’
Clothed him with dominion of wide Heaven.”

In the Greek play Zeus is helped to gain his throne by means of advice given by Prometheus. But Shelley makes his dominion entirely dependent upon the will of Prometheus. As all good is due to Prometheus so all evil, according to Asia, is the work of Jupiter. To the questioning of Asia as to who truly reigns, and whether Jupiter is not a slave, Demogorgon declares that the deep truth is imageless. What would it avail to bid speak Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change. All things are subject to these except eternal Love—a response that Asia's own heart has already given her. But one thing more she must know—when is Prometheus to arise and be the sun of this rejoicing world? As she speaks, suddenly she beholds cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds, which bear the Spirits of the Hours, one of which, she is told by Demogorgon, waits for her. In the car of the chosen Spirit of the Hour, she and Panthea pass within a cloud on top of a snowy mountain. It is the hour for Asia's complete illumination by the Spirit of Love. Panthea can scarce endure the radiance of her beauty. She at once realizes that "Some good change" is working in the ele-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

ments which suffers Asia's presence thus to be unveiled, while Asia herself reaches a climax of ecstatic emotion :

" Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound of ever-spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven,
Till through Elysian garden islets
By the most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnacle glided,
The boat of my desire is guided;
Realms, where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray;
Beyond the glossy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled infancy,
Through Death and Birth to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously."

The time has now come for the dethronement of Jupiter. We see him seated upon his throne, and congratulating himself upon the security of his power. His nuptials with Thetis are consummated, he is full of the glory of their offspring, a mighty spirit, born of two mighty spirits, which awaits from Demogorgon's throne its incarnation. He cries out, "Victory, Victory!" The car of the Hour arrives, and from it Demogorgon descends. "Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!" Jupiter asks, and Demogorgon responds:

"Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child:
Mightier than thee; and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee;
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might."

Jupiter makes an ineffective show of power, but he is doomed; with Demogorgon he sinks into the abyss:

" I sink
Dizzily down, ever, forever down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai! "

We next see Apollo and Ocean. They are talking together at the mouth of a great river in the Island of Atlantis. They have seen the fall of Jupiter and rejoice greatly at the change thus wrought in the affairs of humanity. Ocean sees the Heaven-reflecting sea which is his realm henceforth unstained with blood; his streams flowing round many-peopled continents and round Fortunate Isles, and Apollo declares he shall gaze no more upon deeds which shall make his mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse darkens the sphere he guides.

Upon Jupiter's overthrow follows, of course, the release of Prometheus by Hercules as fore-ordained. At last free, and reunited to Asia, Prome-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

theus pictures the life he with Asia and the sister nymphs will lead. It will be a life of intellectual and artistic development, untouched by the shadow of evil:

“ There is a cave,

All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald; and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears,
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light;
And there is heard the ever-moving air
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with soft long grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and, like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven—bees
From every flower aërial Enna feeds
At their known island-homes in Himera—
The echoes of the human world which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions—dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind arising bright
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality—
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be;
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship, love, by him and us

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which
grow

More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And veil by veil, evil and error fall,
Such virtue has the cave and place around."

The Spirit of the Hour is sent forth by Prometheus bearing with him a mystic shell given him by Panthea at the request of Prometheus. He is to bear it over the cities of mankind, and to breathe into it, loosening its mighty music. The Earth next relates how joy now reanimates her whole being. She tells where the wondrous cave is to be found, henceforth to be the dwelling place of Prometheus and his companions. She calls upon a spirit, which arises in the likeness of a winged child, the Spirit of the Earth, who will conduct them thither.

They reach the destined cave, a bower of Beauty, and there learn more of the Spirit of the Earth. Ione observes:

" how on its head there burns

A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendor drops in flakes upon the grass! "

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Panthea remembers that before Jove reigned the Spirit of the Earth loved Asia and called her mother, for it knew not whence it sprang. Now, again, the Spirit of the Earth runs to Asia, calling:

“Mother, dearest mother!
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?”

The Spirit of the Earth recounts his experience as before, the Earth had done—all the result of the new order, since the victory of Prometheus over Jupiter:

“Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it;
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate;
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;
A long, long, sound, as it would never end;
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Passed floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely
forms

After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again; and when the dawn
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and
efts

Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or line;
All things had put their evil nature off."

He concludes, addressing Asia:

"So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all."

Thus the spiritual aspirations of the Earth and Nature or Asia are reunited as Nature and Mankind typified in Prometheus are reunited. Asia, responding to the Spirit of the Earth, exclaims:

"And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,
And love thee."

The Spirit of the Hour now returns after its journey around the world with the mystic shell, and at the request of Prometheus, relates what it has seen—namely, the practical effect upon the social life of man which has resulted because of the victory over Jupiter. In this passage appears Shelley's complete social philosophy, so lofty a conception of Democracy that mankind is as yet far, not only from the attainment of it, but from the understanding of it:

"I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do—
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.'
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear

Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
 Until the subject of a tyrant's will
 Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
 Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
 None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
 Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak.
 None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
 The sparks of love and hope till there remained
 Those bitter ashes, a soul, self-consumed,
 And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
 Infecting all with his own hideous ill.
 None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
 Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
 Yet questions that unmeant hypocrisy
 With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
 And women, too, frank, beautiful and kind,
 As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
 On the wide earth, passed; gentle, radiant forms,
 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
 Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
 Looking emotions once they dared not feel,
 And changed to all which once they dared not be,
 Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
 The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
 Spoiled the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colors idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself: just, gentle, wise; but man
Passionless—no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them;
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnaced dim in the intense inane.”

Shelley's play originally ended here, but as Mrs. Shelley tells in her note on the play, several months after the completion of the drama which was written principally at the Baths of Caracalla, it occurred to Shelley, when at Florence, that there should be a fourth act, “a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophesies with regard to Prometheus.”

In this general song of rejoicing all the forces of nature, and all the forces of the human mind

take part symbolized as spirits. Panthea and Ione, who are asleep, awaken to the sound of the ecstatic music, and soon they see two marvelous visions—one, the Moon and its guiding spirit, the other, the Earth and its guiding spirit. Ione sees:

“ A chariot like that thinnest boat
 In which the mother of the months is borne
 By ebbing night into her western cave,
 When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;
 O'er which is curved an orb-like canopy
 Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,
 Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
 Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
 Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
 Such as the genii of the thunder-storm
 Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
 When the sun rushes under it; they roll
 And move and grow as with an inward wind;
 Within it sits a wingèd infant—white
 Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
 Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
 Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl,
 Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
 Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
 Of liquid darkness, which the Deity

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow,
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew."

And Panthea sees rushing from the other
opening in the wood

"A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres;
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light;
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, green and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep;
Yet each inter-transpicuous; and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftmess,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.

With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odor of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams,
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like a child o'er wearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings and wavy hair
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

.

And from a star upon its forehead shoot,
Like swords of azure fire or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water-springs
Whence the great sea even as a child is fed,
Whose vapors clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythèd chariots, and emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchered emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
And fishes with their isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God,
Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
Be not! and like my words they were no more."

The Earth and the Moon now take up the song,
and sing of their love for each other and of the
love which interpenetrates all things. The Moon
is no longer the dead world of science; it, too,
feels the reanimating power of infinite love as the
Earth shines upon her:

"The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine;
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom. Oh, it must be thine!
On mine, on mine!"

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“Gazing on thee, I feel, I know,
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move;
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
’Tis love, all love!”

The Earth replies:

“It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds ’tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,—
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest
bowers.”

and much more to the same effect.

The final climax is reached in this poem of climaxes when Demogorgon, the Spirit of Eternity again appears, and as it were extends his blessing to the love-crowned universe:

“Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The Earth

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Demogorgon

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm harmony:

The Moon

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee.

Demogorgon

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
Ethereal Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A Voice (from above)

Our great Republic hears: we are blessed and bless.

Demogorgon

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colors to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A Voice (from beneath)

Or, as they whom we have left, we change and pass
away.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Demogorgon

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A Confused Voice

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

Demogorgon

Spirits, whose homes are flesh; ye beasts and birds.
Ye worms and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untamable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:

A Voice

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

Demogorgon

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave,
A dupe and a deceiver, a decay
A traveler from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

All

Speak: Thy strong words may never pass away.

Demogorgon

This is the day which down the void absym
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despot-
ism,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And Conquest is dragged captive through the
deep;
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance—
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his
length,
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!"

In Shelley's poem, "The Great Cause," has received a conscious treatment which carries it philosophically far beyond the play of Æschylus. The old Greek had caught sight of a great ideal, and sketched it in broad lines, but he does not embody any distinct philosophy of life. There is the revolt of Prometheus against intolerable conditions, which are supported for the time being by omnipotent power, and the strength of character necessary for the carrying out of his purpose to succor mankind at all personal cost. There is the suggestion that Zeus is the symbol of all Nature's forces, whether the blind forces of cosmic nature, the cruel forces of the brute creation, or the savage forces of primitive man. Over against these are all the distinctly human qualities symbolized in Prometheus. The arts and sciences taught man by Prometheus are an epitome of the state of knowledge in the days of Æschylus. Finally, although the sympathies of Æschylus are so fully with Prometheus, he is represented as conscious of sin on his part, through setting up his will against that of Zeus. Æschylus may have seen that the reconciliation must be through Power, as represented

in Zeus becoming softened by the distinctively human qualities of love as represented by Prometheus, but the reader is bound to admit that it appears in the play only by implication and is nowhere distinctly stated. If he saw, it was as through a glass darkly.

Though the play is a reflection of the progress of civilization, and an interpretation of it colored by the strong sympathies of the poet on the side of revolt against tyrannical power, there is on the whole little of the prophetic in it. Prometheus is to be unbound one day, to be sure, the old myth called for that, but one rather gathers the impression, that he as a culture-hero has finished his work for humanity, and is suffering in his own person for his deeds.

While Æschylus has consciously thrown in his weight against an outworn conception of deity, Shelley has with prophetic insight constructed a complete spiritual and social philosophy, clothed in imagery so varied and magnificent that it seems to carry one into unknown regions of the imagination. It might be described as the mythology of the over-soul, so ethereal is the symbolism and so

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

subtle the suggestions of supersensuous realms of emotion.

Mrs. Shelley is the authority for a few hints upon Shelley's theory of evil. He did not regard it as an inherent necessity of the universe, but as an accident which had usurped the otherwise beneficent ordering of cosmic and animal life. He has, therefore, in harmony with this idea taken as his mythical starting point that aspect of the Prometheus story, which emphasizes the Titan's relationship with the older dynasty of ruling gods, and regards Zeus as the usurper. He at once, however, takes the story out of the purely mythological realm, and into the philosophical and symbolical regions of thought. Prometheus is much more closely identified with mankind than in the play of Æschylus; he is, in fact, the concentration of man's mind in its most forward-looking and far-reaching manifestations. Jupiter, it is soon realized, is no objective deity, but man's own crude conception of God as evolved in the earlier phases of his mental development. As man's ideals improve, he looks back upon this earlier conception with hatred, unknowing at first

that it is the outgrowth of his own untutored imagination. In his first revolt against the outgrown conception of deity, his feelings are absolutely at enmity with it. During this phase of feeling he utters the curse which, when he comes to see more clearly, he wishes to recall. When love is awakening to its highest possibilities, pity takes the place of hatred. There is a recognition of the fact that evil is the result of ignorance and blindness, rather than a conscious willing of harm. The advance guard of human thought reaches this plane before the rest of humanity, or mind soars above merely human life. Earth, the mother of Prometheus, and closely sympathetic with her human children, is full of woe at the thought of Prometheus repudiating his hatred of Jupiter. It seems like a falling back into old ways of thinking, when, in reality, it is the one all-comprehending step forward which will lead to complete freedom from the shackles of the old thought.

The completeness of the change in the attitude of Prometheus is subtly suggested by the fact, that he not only does not remember what the curse he uttered was, but that he chooses to hear it from the

shadow of Jupiter, not from the shadow of himself. He has not yet, however, fully attained. Developing humanity can learn only through suffering the utmost agony of spirit. It must choose whether it will suffer all things for the sake of its vision of ideal good or whether it will dwell in ease with the established order. Mercury, belonging to the established order, yet with the friendliness of Hephaistos in the old play, tries his persuasions, but as we have seen to no effect. The agonies of the growing mind are at last relieved by the Spirits of Thought called up by the Earth. Possibly, the idea is that clarifying thought grows out of the return of philosophical thought to life. Certainly, these spirits exert their beneficent influence by means of the visions they carry to Prometheus of mere human deeds and aspirations, which are full of the hope and promise of love. The result of this struggle of the Titan's spirit is to bring home to him the truth that Love is the sole hope for the regeneration of humanity. Through the reuniting of Prometheus and Asia, Love attains its full realization. In making Asia the wife of Prometheus, Shelley follows a clas-

sical legend according to Herodotus, but the idea in the poet's hands is fraught with the subtlest symbolic significance. The most obvious interpretation is to regard Asia as a personification of Nature, whose divorce from mankind has resulted from man's age-long wanderings among the paths of evil. It has the larger suggestion, however, of the union of Wisdom and Emotion or of Knowledge and Love, without which no genuine creative force can be exerted either in social or artistic development. The part played by Panthea in this is somewhat difficult to comprehend. Prometheus calls her the shadow of Asia, and Asia calls her the shadow of Prometheus.

Her characteristics are such that she might be described as a nymph of telepathy. Panthea feels the emotional rebirth of Prometheus in a dream, the full portent of which Asia reads in her eyes. Though Shelley may have had little intention here beyond making beautiful machinery for the expansion of his fancy, one can hardly think of Panthea as other than the thought-waves in modern parlance that constantly pass between Prometheus and Asia. Panthea might be interpreted to be

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Faith, but even if we should accept such an interpretation it would not interfere with her function as thought-bearer between Prometheus and Asia. The results of this final blossoming of man's mind and heart are manifold. Asia and Panthea wander, the bearers of love, into the inmost recesses of nature, reaching finally the portals of Eternity, Demogorgon, where Asia meets her destined Hour, and becomes radiant through the near fulfilment of her destiny.

The conception of God as force linked with the powers of evil can no longer stand, now that man has fully awakened to the beauty of nature and to the possibilities of love in humanity—Jupiter is dethroned by the irresistible onward movement of Eternity which becomes incarnate in his own offspring—a profound way of saying that the old order, through its very insufficiency, is the parent of the new order.

In every realm of nature and mind we are now shown the effects of the new order. Prometheus, always the human mind on its most occult plane, shall dwell with the emotions, Asia and her sister nymphs on their most spiritualized plane, and

these shall lead humanity to ever higher ideals of living, and ever more beautiful ideals of art until "Veil by veil, evil and error fall."

Earth feels the effects in the increased harmony of all her natural processes, and there springs into life again the Spirit that guides her through space, and of old was wont to call Asia his mother. This Spirit may typify a scientific conception of the Earth, which seems to take the place of the mythological conception of the Earth as the mother of humanity. In the fourth act, it is from the Star on its forehead that light is thrown upon all the secrets of the Earth's deep heart. These, as Panthea describes them, are the records of geological ages,

"Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,"

"Wells of unfathomed fire and water springs,"

and the records of past phases of civilization,

"Melancholy ruins of cancelled cycles."

Such a spirit of science, or, more abstractly speaking truth, would naturally regard Nature or Asia as its mother. The love of this spirit for the Spirit of the Moon, its sister reaches wonderful

expression in the fourth act. This spirit, as described by Ione, might well be typical of abstract Beauty:

“ Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
 Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
 Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl;
 Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
 Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
 Of liquid darkness.”

So the glory of Love, born in the soul of man permeates all Being. Man and nature are united by it, mind and emotion, or the reasoning and intuitional faculties, abstract truth and abstract beauty. The practical results of the evolution of mind and spirit are even more remarkable and reveal Shelley's social creed. The Spirit of the Earth sees first all that is ugly in human shapes and visages fall from them like a foul disguise, when the shell of the Spirit of the Hour is sounded in the great city. Then the Spirit of the Hour itself gives the circumstantial account of the social regeneration. The world has become such a one as the French Revolutionists dreamed of, but

which they failed of attaining because they could not learn as Prometheus did to put pity and love in the place of hatred. Politically, the social state is as free of rulers and judges, policemen and prisons as the philosophical anarchist of to-day would have it. There is this difference, however; the anarchist would plunge an imperfect humanity into the millennium of an individual-governed society. Shelley represents such a society as the natural outcome of a human state wherein development has reached the point of perfect individual control. The prevailing mood when humanity truly loves will be that of absolute sincerity, absolute kindliness, purity of heart and of intention in all human relationships. All emotions will be ennobled by the controlling power of mind, and on the other hand, the mind will be illuminated by the quickening power of emotion. And, as Æschylus made womanhood in the person of Io share in the new order through finally experiencing a gentle touch from the hand of Zeus after the wanderings she had endured at his hands, so Shelley makes womanhood share in the triumph of freedom. She is to speak wisdom that once she

could not even think, yet be gentle and radiant, she is to be exempt from custom's evil taint, but above all she is to be free from jealousy or envy or pride. One cannot but sympathize with Shelley in such an ideal of womanhood. Verily it would, as he says, make earth like heaven. Would that all women might to-day take the ideal to their hearts and aspire to be wise, gentle and radiant, instead of smart, competitive and conspicuous; crushing out pride, jealousy and envy rather than cultivating vanity, enmity and the desire for admiration. Equally to be welcomed, a man:

"Exempt from awe, worship, degree,"

yet the king over himself not free from passion, yet free from guilt or pain, just, gentle and wise. All this may come to pass if man wills it to do so, for it has only been through his will that evil has been permitted to exist. Shelley thus finally makes the will the chief factor in the evolution of man's spirit. He does not fall into the mistake of supposing that chance and death and mutability can be ruled out of human existence. They do not come under the sway of the will, they are merely the con-

ditions under which the human will is obliged to work, but furnish no excuse for the exercise of evil impulses in man's own nature. On the contrary, he is to rule them like slaves. As the play first existed this was the climax in the thought, being the end of the third act. In the added fourth act, Shelley's poetic imagination soars to supersensuous realms. We leave the tangible plane of mind and emotion, quickened into abiding harmony by Love and voyage among what Whitman might call the "seas of God." As I have already indicated, abstract Beauty seems to be symbolized in the Spirit of the Moon, abstract Truth in the Spirit of the Earth; they take upon themselves the garments of the human spirit and give voice to a love that seems to express the quintessence of exalted emotion. Hear the Moon:

"Thou art folded, thou art lying
 In the light which is undying
 Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
 All suns and constellations shower
 On thee a light, a life, a power,
 Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
 On mine, on mine!"

And again the Earth:

“O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
 Soothing the seaman borne the summer night
 Through isles forever calm;
 O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
 Charming the tiger joy, whose trappings fierce
 Made wounds which need thy balm.”

In bringing Demogorgon on the scene at the end of the act, Shelley once again touches the Infinite beyond thought or emotion. We can neither think nor feel Eternity, yet we know it in our highest consciousness as the ultimate condition of our Being. Thus it is fitting that Eternity, not Death nor Chance nor Change, which are but Motes in the sunbeams of the Infinite, becomes the supreme instructor of the will. The final word of Demogorgon implies that the dispensation of Truth, Love and Beauty is not yet accomplished throughout the universe, but that man may experience it in his own soul whenever he attains the spiritual heights of Prometheus, and becomes strong:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free.
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.”

Of this closing scene George E. Woodberry, the editor of Shelley's complete works, speaks with peculiar insight in his notes:

“The sudden and complete subordination of all the beings of the universe to the idea of the Eternal Principle is accomplished with sublime effect. The drama is thus brought to an end, after its lyrical jubilee, by its highest intellectual conception giving utterance to its highest moral command—Demogorgon, the voice of Eternity, phrasing in the presence of the listening Universe of all being, the encomium of Prometheus as the type of the soul's wisdom in action in an evil world leading to the achievement of such regeneration on earth as is possible to a mortal race.”

After all allowances are made for the traces

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

of Platonic and other Greek thought, and the echoes of poetic imagery borrowed from Milton and Shakespeare or other English poets, this drama stands out as one of the most original as well as beautiful creations in all literature. It has been analyzed to bits by various commentators, who read into it the most complicated metaphysical meanings. Doubtless, they are quite justified in their interpretations, for one of the characteristics of exalted symbolism is that like music it lends itself to the mood of the interpreter. Not only is it near to music because of the highly emotional and ecstatic language in which most of it is couched, but the thought of a universal stream of music is ever flowing out from the verse. Music is the element in which Love and Beauty attain their most exalted manifestations. Echoes music-tongued draw all spirits on that secret way:

“Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along.”

The Spirit of the Hour announces its triumph
in music

“A long, long sound, as it would never end.”

One is constantly reminded of the Pythagorean notion of the harmony of the spheres, so exquisitely described in Shakespeare's familiar lines:

“ There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdst,
But in his motion like an angel sings
Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubims
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close in it we cannot hear it.”

The Greek harmony of the spheres was a melodic one, crude indeed, in comparison with our modern conceptions of harmony. Between the simple, sculpturesque strength of the Greek “ Prometheus ” play and the many-tinted, symbolistic nature-painting of Shelley's play, there is as great a difference as between the naked scales of Pythagoras and the poignant soul-touching diminished seventh harmonies of a modern symphony.

Around this double sun of Prometheus plays, other modern treatments revolve with more or less reflected brilliancy. Herder brings in Themis as the Goddess of Justice to judge between the cause of Prometheus and Zeus. The judgment is, of



PROMETHEUS UNBOUND. (MAX KLINGER.)

Reproduced by permission of Mr. Hugo Reisinger and the authorities of the *Copley Society* from an etching in the German Exhibition.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

course, in favor of Prometheus, whose heart has become softened. Schlegel's Prometheus is the maker of a new race of men from clay animated with heavenly fire.

Ethically, these works tend in the same direction as Shelley's, Prometheus or mankind will finally win through belief in the good with the aspiration and will to attain it through suffering and toil. Herder's emphasis is upon human Reason with a maintenance, as Woodberry says, of "self-sacrifice, perseverance, patience, social labor and love as the essential elements of the moral ideal." Schlegel's emphasis is upon the law of progress, "though there may be ages of terror and apparent degeneration, yet the immortal principle of good in the race is such that it passes invulnerable through all history, and accomplishes the work of civilization." Goethe's fragmentary drama is the most interesting of the German attempts to conjecture a world in which Prometheus would be unbound.

Goethe, himself, has given the keynote to the play. He writes:

"The old mythologic figure of Prometheus oc-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

curred to me, who severed from the gods, peopled the world from his own workshop. I clearly felt that nothing important could be produced without self-isolation, so, after the fashion of Prometheus I separated myself from the gods also, and this the more naturally as with my mode of thinking one tendency always swallowed up and repelled every other.

“The fable of Prometheus lived within me. The old Titan web I cut up according to my own stature and began to write a play.”

Accordingly, in Goethe's play, the rebel god suffering punishment for his freely chosen sin, gives place to a being utterly independent, over whom Zeus has no power as long as he is true to his chosen ideals. The familiar figure of Prometheus chained to a rock in the Caucasus is lacking. Instead, we see the genius of art who lives and moves and has his being among his creations. His voice is never heard in complaints against the forceful rule of Zeus, for it is he, himself, who rules—the spirit of eternal art. Zeus, symbolic of the conventions which the world thinks important, of the standards conserved from the past, is

in truth the suppliant to the creative, progressive energy of Prometheus. The drama opens with pacific offers from the gods of Olympus borne by Hermes, which Prometheus receives with this stout declaration of independence.

"I will not, say to them briefly, I will not. Their will against mine. One against the other. Thus methinks it stands."

"To take this to thy father and thy mother?"

exclaims the pious Hermes.

"What father! mother! I stand where I from the first have perceived my feet should stand, and reached these hands where I perceived they should reach, and found attention to my steps to be that which thou namest—father! mother!"

It would be difficult to find a stronger expression than this of the complete self-reliance of genius, which, as already mentioned, Goethe felt to be the only attitude possible for the development of his own powers:

"Go, I serve not slaves."

Hermes is thus summarily dismissed. Prometheus recognizes alone the power of Fate, by which

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Goethe probably meant to signify universal law.

Not a whit more successful than *Hermes* in his approach to *Prometheus* is *Epimetheus*—the very personification of stupid conventionalism. The gods propose to raise you to the highest peak of *Olympos*, there to dwell and reign over the whole earth, *Epimetheus* tells him. But, with the same steadfastness as the *Prometheus* of *Æschylus*, he is proof against offers from a faction with which he feels he has nothing in common, and contemptuously retorts:

“To be their captain of the castle and protect their heaven. That which I have they cannot rob me of; that which they have, let them guard. Here, mine, and there, thine; so are we distinguished.”

Having thus cut himself off entirely from the ruling gods, *Wisdom* (*Athênê*) tells him that *Zeus* offers to bestow life on all his beloved artistic creations if he will entertain the *Olympian* proposition. Still he is not to be moved, but concludes that freedom under the bondage of lifelessness is preferable to recognizing the might of the thunderer.

“And they shall live,”

bursts forth Athênê.

“It is Fate not the Gods who bestow life.”

Thus Wisdom leads him to the fountain of life, and his works become living realities.

Prometheus continues with his work of teaching mankind, which has gained its very existence, all, at least, that is worth having through his ministry, and the last we see of him in Goethe's play is at work in his workshop, from which he hurls forth the vigorous defiance which, as Goethe himself naïvely tells us, has become so celebrated in German literature, having caused a controversy between Lessing and Jacobi on “Certain weighty matters of thought and feeling.”

Though, in this play, the Democratic idea is developed to the extent of insistence upon the individual worth and equality of genius as opposed to any standards set up by past critics—a lesson needing to be learned just as surely as that of political and social democracy, yet one feels disposed to echo the sentiment of Hermes in the Æschylean drama, when he said to Prometheus, “If thou

wert prosperous thou wouldst be unendurable." It would be possible to imagine a modern Goethe—one who did not depend so much upon Princes' favors, leading men, miserable men, in revolt against any such autocratic rule of intellect; setting up in its place universal mediocrity, which in turn might be displaced by dull stupidity. By the shadowing forth of such bitter experiences, king, priest, poet and professor might have brought home to them the fact that the Democratic idea in its full development means the working out by each and every being, whether genius or not, of his own highest individuality—but never the displacement of one set of rulers for another whose patronage merely takes a different form. This Shelley saw so clearly that it is doubtful whether the Democratic idea will ever attain loftier heights than it does in his play.

The most interesting of the French treatments is that of Edgar Quinet. Shelley's outlook upon the possibilities for absolute joy and happiness scintillated with faith, but the mood of the later poet is one of hope mingled with doubt. There are some very original touches in his treatment

showing his conscious purpose of harmonizing the Greek Prometheus ideal with the ideal of historical Christianity. "Each new age of humanity," he writes, "can put new oracles in the mouth of the Titan. Perhaps there is no character so well fitted to express the feelings—the premature and half melancholy desires—in which our age is en-chained." In his drama, he tells in the first act of the creation of man by Prometheus, with the gift of fire which he makes symbolic of the soul. Life begins in struggle and sorrow. In the second act we see the sufferings of Prometheus on Caucasus, but, in prophesying the fall of Zeus, he declares that it is to be brought about by the birth of Christ into the world. In the third act Christianity has become an established fact, Prometheus is released by the archangels Raphael and Michael. He rises transfigured, and the gods of the old order supplicate him to spare them, but without avail. Then, while he listens to the death song of the gods, doubts begin to crowd in upon him. Perhaps the new divinity will pass away, and perhaps there will be more suffering on Caucasus. He ascends to Heaven with the doubt in his heart.

Neither the comfort given him by the angels, nor the reign of celestial peace and love can allay it. Of this play, Woodberry says:

"This attempt at a true synthesis of the Greek and Christian imagination—in behalf of the unity of history—is a most interesting illustration of the spirit of the century, which was, on the whole, a century of peacemaking between the great historic elements of spiritual civilization, a drawing together and harmonizing of religions, philosophies and half-developed and fragmentary doctrines, by virtue of the identical principle they contain; or, as Herder said, in consequence of that symmetry of human reason which makes all nobler minds tend to think the same thoughts."

As a work of art Shelley's drama is in every way superior to the other modern treatments, and moreover, though it makes so strong an appeal to the imagination, its thought also touches a deeper note than that of the poets whose conscious purpose was to solve ethical and social problems rather than to convince of Beauty by the creation of Beauty. The strength of Shelley's thought consists in the fact that he does not set up a new

divinity. His conception of Eternity is the nearest he approaches to it, and this is equivalent to saying that divinity furnishes to mankind endless opportunity to reach out toward and attain his highest ideals.

Another English poet has made an application of the myth which is of interest from the philosophical point of view. I refer to that of Robert Browning in one of his later poems, "Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day." The poem deals, in a series of dramatic monologues, with various philosophical problems, and in "Bernard de Mandeville," the unbelief of man is discussed. Toward the end of the poem all nature is described as rejoicing in the light of the sun, which is here used as a symbol of divinity, man alone being joyless and thankless. The passage is worth quoting in full:

"Boundingly up through Night's wall dense and dark,
Embattled crags and clouds, outbroke the Sun
Above the conscious earth, and one by one
Her heights and depths absorbed to the last spark
His fluid glory, from the far fine ridge
Of mountain granite which, transformed to gold

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Laughed first the thanks back, to the vale's dusk fold
On fold of vapor-swathing, like a bridge
Shattered beneath some giant's stamp. Night wist
Her work done and betook herself in mist
To marsh and hollow there to bide her time
Blindly in acquiescence. Everywhere
Did earth acknowledge Sun's embrace sublime
Thrilling her to the heart of things: since there
No ore ran liquid, no spar branched anew
No arrowy crystal gleamed, but straightway grew
Glad through the inrush—glad nor more nor less
Than, 'neath his gaze, forest and wilderness,
Hill, dale, land, sea, the whole vast stretch and spread,
The universal world of creatures bred
By Sun's munificence, alike gave praise—
All creatures but one only: gaze for gaze,
Joyless and thankless, who—all scowling can—
Protests against the innumerable praises? Man,
Sullen and silent.

Stand thou forth then, state
Thy wrong, thou sole aggrieved—disconsolate—
While every beast, bird, reptile, insect, gay
And glad acknowledges the bounteous day!
“Man speaks now. ‘What avails Sun's earth-felt thrill
To me?’ Sun penetrates the ore, the plant—
They feel and grow: perchance with subtler skill
He interfuses fly, worm, brute, until

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Each favored object pays life's ministrant
By pushing, in obedience to his will,
Up to completion of the task prescribed,
So stands and stays a type. Myself imbibed
Such influence also, stood and stand complete—
The perfect Man—head, body, hands and feet,
True to the pattern: but does that suffice?
How of my superadded mind which needs—
Not to be, simply, but to do, and pleads
For—more than knowledge that by some device
Sun quickens matter: mind is nobly fain
To realize the marvel, make—for sense
As mind—the unseen visible, condense—
Myself—Sun's all-pervading influence
So as to serve the needs of mind, explain
What now perplexes. Let the oak increase
His corrugated strength on strength, the palm
Lift joint by joint her fan-fruit, ball and balm—
Let the coiled serpent bask in bloated peace—
The eagle like some skyey derelict,
Drift in the blue, suspended, glorying—
The lion lord it by the desert-spring—
What know or care they of the power which pricked
Nothingness to perfection? I, instead
When all-developed still am found a thing
All-incomplete: for what though flesh had force
Transcending theirs—hands able to unring

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The tightened snake's coil, eyes that could outcourse
The eagle's soaring, voice whereat the king
Of Carnage couched discrowned? Mind seeks to see,
Touch, understand, by mind inside of me,
The outside mind—whose quickening I attain
To recognize—I only. All in vain
Would mind address itself to render plain
The nature of the essence. Drag what lurks
Behind the operation—that which works
Latently everywhere by outward proof—
Drag that mind forth to face mine? No! aloof
I solely crave that one of all the beams
Which do Sun's work in darkness, at my will
Should operate—myself for once have skill
To realize the energy which streams
Flooding the universe. Above, around,
Beneath—why mocks that mind my own thus found
Simply of service, when the world grows dark,
To half-surmise—were Sun's use understood,
I might demonstrate him supplying food,
Warmth, life, no less the while? To grant one spark
Myself may deal with—make it thaw my blood
And prompt my steps, were truer to the mark
Of mind's requirement than a half-surmise
That somehow secretly is operant
A power all matter feels, mind only tries
To comprehend! Once more—no idle vaunt

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

‘ Man comprehends the Sun’s self ! ’ Mysteries
At source why probe into? Enough: display,
Make demonstrable, how, by night as day,
Earth’s center and sky’s outspan, all informed
Equally by Sun’s efflux!—source from whence
If just one spark I drew, full evidence
Were mine of fire ineffably enthroned—
Sun’s self made palpable to Man! ”

This burning desire to understand in its entirety
the nature of divine law, is helped only by Prometheus who, according to Browning, steals his
fire in an up-to-date, scientific manner:

“ Thus moaned
Man till Prometheus helped him—as we learn—
Offered an artifice whereby he drew
Sun’s rays into a focus—plain and true,
The very Sun in little: made fire burn
And henceforth do Man service—glass-conglobed
Though to a pin-point circle—all the same
Comprising the Sun’s self, but Sun disrobed
Of that else-unconceived essential flame
Borne by no naked sight. Shall mind’s eye strive
Achingly to companion as it may
The supersubtle effluence, and contrive
To follow beam and beam upon their way

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Hand-breadth by hand-breadth, till sense faint—
 confessed
Frustrate, eluded by unknown, unguessed.
Infinitude of action? Idle quest!
Rather ask aid from optics. Sense, descry
The spectrum—mind, infer immensity!
Little? In little, light, warmth, life are blessed—
Which, in the large, who sees to bless? Not I,
More than yourself."

The little image of the sun made by the lens is the fire stolen from heaven, and in accordance with a favorite philosophical idea of the poet's, this image of the sun is human feeling in all its possibilities of gratefulness and aspiration and love. Through these emotions, man may know most surely something of the divine nature, and to know something of the divine nature is to prove the existence of God—however beyond human ken may be a complete realization of his divinity.

Among other minor treatments of the myth are those of Longfellow and Lowell. The manner of using the story is, in each case, characteristic of the poet. Neither one adds anything new to it in thought or imagination, but the moods reflect

the temperaments of the two poets. Longfellow sketches in easy, spontaneous verse, the story of Prometheus, calls it a symbol of the poet, the prophet and the seer, and then makes, after his wont, a moral application of the story. It has charm as much of Longfellow's poetry has, because of a certain naïveté and grace which give it a sort of primitive flavor as of the early songs of poets. He calls it "Prometheus or the Poet's Forethought":

"Of Prometheus, how undaunted
 On Olympus' shining bastions
 His audacious foot he planted,
 Myths are told and songs are chaunted,
 Full of promptings and suggestions.

"Beautiful is the tradition
 Of that flight through heavenly portals,
 The old classic superstition
 Of the theft and the transmission
 Of the fire of the Immortals!

"First the deed of noble daring,
 Born of heavenward aspiration,
 Then the fire with mortals sharing,
 Then the vulture—the despairing
 Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

- “ All is but a symbol painted
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer;
Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer.
- “ In their feverish exultations,
In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations,
The Prometheus fire is burning.
- “ Shall it, then, be unavailing,
All this toil for human culture?
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
Must they see above them sailing
O'er life's barren crags the vulture?
- “ Such a fate as this was Dante's,
By defeat and exile maddened;
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,
Nature's priests and Corybantes,
By affliction touched and saddened.
- “ But the glories so transcendent
That around their memories cluster,
And, on all their steps attendant
Make their darkened lives resplendent
With such gleams of inward luster!

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ All the melodies mysterious,
Through the dreary darkness chaunted;
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,
Words that whispered, songs that haunted

“ All the soul in rapt suspension,
All the quivering, palpitating
Chords of life in utmost tension,
With the fervor of invention,
With the rapture of creating!

“ Ah, Prometheus! heaven-scaling!
In such hours of exultation
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,
Might behold the vulture sailing
Round the cloudy crags Caucasian!

“ Though to all there is not given
Strength for such sublime endeavor,
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
And to leaven with fiery leaven
All the hearts of men forever;

“ Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted
Honor and believe the presage,
Hold aloft their torches lighted,
Gleaming through the realms benighted,
As they onward bear the message! ” .

Such is the simple little ethical tale Longfellow makes of it. Lowell is equally ethical, but adds to the ethics a somewhat long-winded vein of philosophizing. Again we see Prometheus, himself, suffering torments upon the crags of Caucasus. It is difficult, however, to feel any great sympathy for him because of his "colossal egotism." Prometheus, preaching upon himself as a text, is the depressing spectacle with which we are brought face to face. He tells about all the great things he has done in the past and prophesies about his importance to mankind in the future. Addressing Zeus, Prometheus says:

"Not that I feel that hunger after fame,
Which souls of a half-greatness are beset with;
But that the memory of noble deeds
Cries shame upon the idle and the vile,
And keeps the heart of man forever up
To the heroic level of old time.
To be forgot at first is little pain
To a heart conscious of such high intent
As must be deathless on the lips of men;
But, having been a name, to sink and be
A something which the world can do without,
Which, having been or not, would never change

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The lightest pulse of fate—this is indeed
A cup of bitterness, the worst to taste,
And this thy heart shall empty to the dregs.
Endless despair shall be thy Caucasus,
And memory thy vulture; thou wilt find
Oblivion far lonelier than this peak.
Behold thy destiny! Thou think'st it much
That I should brave thee, miserable god!
But I have braved a mightier than thou,
Even the sharp tempting of this soaring heart,
Which might have made me, scarcely less than thou,
A god among my brethren weak and blind,
Scarce less than thou, a pitiable thing
To be down-trodden into darkness soon.
But now I am above thee, for thou art
The bungling workmanship of fear, the block
That awes the swart Barbarian; but I
Am what myself have made—a nature wise
With finding in itself the types of all,
With watching from the dim verge of the time
What things to be are visible in the gleams
Thrown forward on them from the luminous past,
Wise with the history of its own frail heart,
With reverence and with sorrow, and with love,
Broad as the world, for freedom and for man.

“Thou and all strength shall crumble, except Love,
By whom and for whose glory, ye shall cease:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And, when thou'rt but a weary moaning heard
From out the pitiless gloom of Chaos, I
Shall be a power and a memory,
A name to fright all tyrants with, a light
Unsetting as the pole-star, a great voice
Heard in the breathless pauses of the fight
By truth and freedom ever waged with wrong,
Clear as a silver trumpet, to awake
Far echoes that from age to age live on
In kindred spirits, giving them a sense
Of boundless power from boundless suffering wrung:
And many a glazing eye shall smile to see
The memory of my triumph (for to meet
Wrong with endurance, and to overcome
The present with a heart that looks beyond,
Are triumph), like a prophet eagle perch
Upon the sacred banner of the Right."

The poet, himself, seems to have been in a somewhat egotistical frame of mind when he wrote the poem, for he speaks of it in a letter to one friend as the best poem he has ever written, "overrunning with true radicalism and antislavery." He goes on, "I think it will open the eyes of some folk and make them think that I am a poet whatever they may say." In another letter he says:

"Although such great names as Goethe and Shelley have all handled the subject in modern times, you will find that I have looked at it from a somewhat new point of view. I have made it *radical*, and I believe that no poet in this age can write much that is good unless he give himself up to this tendency."

Lowell seems to be unaware of the fact that he has brought forth no idea of freedom or radicalism in his poem which is not either said or implied in Shelley's great work,—while in his development of pity in the heart of Prometheus for Jupiter, Shelley takes that highest step possible in human love—the loving of one's enemies. Translated into modern economic phraseology the harmony of revolt against tyranny and pity for the tyrant thus resolves itself into progress through evolution rather than by revolution. All the good resulting from the suffering and endurance of Prometheus is, in Shelley's play, set forth by others. When his work is accomplished, he disappears almost entirely from the scene, and in the added fourth act he does not appear at all. The artistic effect of this arrangement is superb. It

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

raises the social and artistic philosophy which would have the dullness of outright didacticism if given forth in the manner of Lowell's Prometheus, into regions of intensely emotional and imaginative expression. Furthermore, by putting the praise of Prometheus into the mouth of Demogorgon, no trace of egotism is allowed to shadow the greatness of the Titan's character.

THE MOON AND THE SUN FROM
THE HOMERIC HYMNS TO KEATS

III

The Moon and the Sun from the Homeric Hymns to Keats

DIANA AND ENDYMION BEFORE AND AFTER KEATS

THE myth of Diana and Endymion has appealed to many poets and artists because of its intrinsic loveliness. Each poet who has versified the story has found some different element to emphasize in his interpretation of the myth,—to all, however, it has been the symbol of some exquisite ideal. The myth was originally told of an earlier moon-goddess than Diana or Artemis as the Greeks called her. This earliest of Greek moon-goddesses was Selene, and so primitive is the conception of her that she is hardly more than a simple personification of the Moon, like those to be found in the myths of primitive races all over the globe, and like the Moon in many of these

myths she is the sister of Helios or the Sun, while her father is the Titan, Hyperion, a still older form of the Sun, and her sister Eos, the Dawn. This is according to the account in Hesiod. In Homer the relationships are somewhat confused through the identifying of Helios and Hyperion as the same person.

Most of the gods and goddesses of the great Olympian hierarchy in the Greek mythology, were, originally personifications of natural phenomena. At first these cosmic objects—such as the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Sky and the Dawn were thought of as personal beings. Later the personal Sun or Moon gave place to a spirit of the Sun or the Moon, and still later this spirit was almost freed from its connection with the original natural phenomenon, and so left free to develop a complex intellectual and spiritual personality such as that of the later Apollo and Artemis, doubtless originally the Sun and the Moon, but so much more, as they are portrayed in the Greek poets, that their origin is only recognized in elements which seem to be survivals of the earlier personal Sun and Moon.



DIANA.

It happened sometimes that in this evolutionary process, the older names survived after the new name and conception had been attached to the object, thus we find in Greek mythology actually three Sun Gods, Helios, Hyperion, and Apollo, and two moon-goddesses, Selene and Artemis. The same process occurred also in the case of other Greek mythical conceptions, such as that of the Sky and the Earth.

There is much the same charm attaching to these early personal conceptions of the Sun and Moon as there is to those found in the ancient Vedic Hymns.

The Homeric Hymn to Selene, reminds one of a Vedic Hymn to the Dawn, in its almost equally naïve delight in the beauty of the phenomena of nature, with the added element of worshipfulness toward a divine being:

“Come, sing the wing-stretching Moon, ye Muses, sweet-voiced daughters of Jove, the son of Saturn, skilled in song, whose heaven-shown gleam surrounds the earth, her gleam shining forth, and the dark night is illumined by her golden crown, and her rays are diffused around, when that, having laved her fair form

in Ocean, the divine Moon, having put on her far-shining garments, having yoked her stout-necked, glittering foals, swiftly drives her fair-haired steeds onward, at even, at the middle of the month, when her great orb is full, and the rays of her then increasing are most brilliant in heaven, and she is a mark and a sign to mortals. With her the son of Saturn once mingled in love and the couch, and she, becoming pregnant, brought forth a daughter, Pandeia, possessing surpassing beauty among the immortal gods. Hail! White-armed queen goddess, divine Moon, benignant, fair-haired; and commencing from thee, I will sing the praises of demigod heroes, whose deeds, bards, servants of the Muses, celebrate, from their pleasant voices."

Charming as this literal translation is, under Shelley's poetic touch, this hymn takes on an added ethereal splendor:

" Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody,
Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy,
Sing the wide-wingèd Moon! Around the earth,
From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,
Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs;
Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings,
The lampless air glows round her golden crown.
But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Under the sea, her beams within abide,
Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide,
Clothing her form in garments glittering far,
And having yoked to her immortal car
The beam-invested steeds whose necks on high
Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky
A western Crescent, borne impetuously.
Then is made the full circle of her light,
And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright
Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,
A wonder and a sign to mortal men.
The son of Saturn with this glorious Power
Mingled in love and sleep, to whom she bore,
Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare
Among the Gods whose lives eternal are.
Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,
Fair-haired and favorable! Thus with thee,
My song beginning, by its music sweet
I shall make immortal many a glorious feat
Of demigods,—with lovely lips, so well
Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell."

Allusions to the story of Selene and Endymion occur frequently in the Greek and Latin writers, and by piecing these together a tolerably consistent version of it may be obtained. Selene was regarded as a most beautiful goddess with long

wings. Upon her head she wore a golden diadem, as we have already seen described in the Homeric Hymn, and Æschylus poetically speaks of her as "the eye of night." Like her brother, Helios, she rode across the Heavens in a chariot drawn either by two white horses, cows or mules. According to Pausanias, she was represented on the pedestal of the throne of Zeus at Olympia, riding on a horse or mule, while at Elis there was a statue of her with two horns, which suggests her connection with the cow. Wherever, in mythology, animals are brought into close relationship with gods and goddesses, either as sacrificial animals or steeds it indicates that at some long distant time when men's minds were groping about in the early shadows of thought, the animals themselves were worshipped, or that natural phenomena were personified as animals. With the progress toward higher mental conceptions, the animals were at last superseded by the human personifications of natural phenomena already mentioned.

Although there came to be in Greece another moon-goddess, Artemis, the two did not remain distinct. The myth of Selene, whose love for

Endymion was the talk of the Olympians, was told of the virgin goddess, Artemis, who was, herself, with all the nymphs of her train vowed to perpetual maidenhood. According to the mythologist, Claus, quoted by Andrew Lang:

“In the development of Artemis may most clearly be distinguished the progress of the human intellect from the early, rude, and as it were natural ideas to the fair and brilliant fancies of poets and sculptors.” And, as Andrew Lang goes on to say:

“There is no goddess more beautiful, pure and maidenly in the poetry of Greece. There she shines as the sister of Apollo; her chapels are in the wildwood; she is the abbess of the forest nymphs, chaste and fair, the maiden of the precise life, the friend of the virginal Hippolytus; always present even if unseen with the pure of heart. Among the riot of Olympian lovers she alone, with Athênê, satisfies the ascetic longing for a proud remoteness and reserve. But though it is thus that the poets dream of her, from the author of the *Odyssey* to Euripides, yet the local traditions and cults of Artemis, in many widely separ-

ated districts, combine her legend with hideous cruelties, with almost cannibal rites, with relics of the wild worship of the beasts whom, in her character as the goddess of the chase, she preserves rather than protects. For her, bears, deer, doves, wolves—all the tameless herds of the hills and forests, are driven through the fire in Achaia. She is adored with bear dances by the Attic girls."

In spite of this later conception of Artemis as the virginal huntress, the love story of Selene and Endymion became so persistently attached to her legend, that the love of Artemis for Endymion has become symbolic of the most exalted love, or even of Love as an abstract ideal. The character of the goddess has not suffered. On the contrary, the conception of love has been raised because of this virgin goddess's kiss of perfect love.

The story of their fifty children, a crudity of the earlier myth is forgotten; the poets think of the pure and radiant goddess who bestows her love upon the beautiful shepherd of Mount Latmos, and of the decree of Zeus, that because of this love, Endymion might have his choice between death in any manner he might prefer, and perpetual



DIANA AND HER NYMPHS.

youth united with perpetual sleep. They think of him, having preferred the latter, still sleeping in his Carian Cave, whither the goddess descends and touches his forehead with her pure lips; they think of her loving care which through all the eternity of his sleep guards his sheep and lambs from beasts of prey and yields his flock increase. Well might Theocritus exclaim

“Blessed, methinks is the lot of him that sleeps and tosses not nor turns, even Endymion.”

Nor was this sleeping youth of mythology without interest to the philosopher. Hear Socrates, in the *Phædo*:

“You know that if there were no compensation of sleeping and waking, the story of the sleeping Endymion would in the end have no meaning, because all other things would be asleep, too, and he would not be thought of.”

Evidently, the point of the story to both the Poet, Theocritus, and the philosopher, Socrates, is the fact of Endymion's eternal sleep, an opinion which brings them into harmony with those interpreters of the myth who see in the story a poetical fiction

in which sleep is personified. According to these, his name and all his attributes confirm this opinion. Endymion signifies a being that gently comes over one. In some versions of the myth he is called a king, and this, these same interpreters say, is because he has power over all living creatures; and again he is called a shepherd, because he slumbered in the cool caves of Mount Latmos, that is, the Mount of Oblivion.

Ancient authorities are by no means agreed as to the cause of his sleep. It is related in the Scholia of Theocritus that he was received among the gods of Olympus, but as he there fell in love with Hera, Zeus in his anger punished him by throwing him into eternal sleep on Mount Latmos. There is such a thing as a libel on the character of a myth, and this we instinctively feel is one—a later myth of explanation to account for an element, the origin of which had been forgotten. A slightly better account states that Selene was so charmed with the surpassing beauty of Endymion that she sent him to sleep in order that she might be able to kiss him without being observed by him.

Various stories exist in regard to Endymion, also. Some traditions refer us to Elis, some to Caria, and others are a combination of the two. According to Apollodorus and Pausanias he was a son of Aëthlius and Calyce or of Zeus and Calyce and succeeded Aëthlius in the kingdom of Elis, introducing into the country Æolian settlers from Thessaly. He is given a number of wives and children. These wives were Asterodia, Chromia, Hyperippe, Neïs or Iphianessa, while his children were Paeon, Epeius, Eurydice, and Naxas. A tradition believed in in Caria said that Endymion came from Elis to Mount Latmos in Caria, hence he was called the Latmian.

Besides the interpretation of Endymion as a personification of sleep, he was thought to be a young hunter, who under the moonlight followed the chase, but in the daytime slept; or he symbolized the growth of vegetation in the dewy moonlight, or lastly, he is the setting sun upon whom the rising moon delights to gaze, and then, according to Boeck, his fifty children by Selene would be the fifty months of the Olympiad. or Greek period of four years.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

This myth has not by any means the possibilities for forceful philosophical development which belong to the Prometheus myth. The one is a myth that has been made to symbolize the stupendous drama of man's material and spiritual evolution from the dim caves of human beginnings to the lofty peaks where the utmost star in the spaces of eternity brings to him its meaning; the other is a symbol of personal emotion bearing within it only what the vision of the poet is able to achieve in his ideal of love. Fletcher, for example, in "The Faithful Shepherdess," makes Cloe tell Thenot the simple tale of love in a few dainty lines, while Keats develops the theme in a wonderful poem of four thousand lines and more. Cloe's tale relates merely

"How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she conveyed him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy to the steep
Head of Latmos, where she stops each night,
To kiss her sweetest."

Before turning to Keats, and his four thousand

lines of luxuriant imagery which blazed forth from the furnace of his own ignited soul, we must take a look at the adventurous if somewhat uninspired performance of John Lyly, who wrote a play, which few but students of literature know, but which was important in its own day, and was acted "before her Queen's Majesty at Greenwich on Candlemas Day, at Night, by the Children of St. Paul's." This is not strictly speaking a development of the myth. Endymion and the Moon, who is called by her name of Cynthia, are simply allegorical stalking horses who are made to go through certain paces in a more or less blind alley, the true purport being to illustrate an episode in the career of Queen Elizabeth, and to delight her Royal Highness with the subtle flatteries always so pleasing to her vanity.

The play opens with a scene between Endymion and his friend Eumenides, in which the former gives extravagant expression to his love for Cynthia:

"*Endymion.* I find, Eumenides, in all things both variety to content, and satiety to glut, saving only in my affections, which are so staid, and withal so stately,

that I can neither satisfy my heart with love, nor mine eyes with wonder. My thoughts, Eumenides, are stitched to the stars, which being as high as I can see, thou mayest imagine how much higher they are than I can reach.

“*Eum.* If you be enamored of anything above the moon, your thoughts are ridiculous, for that things immortal are not subject to affections; if allured or enchanted with these transitory things under the moon, you show yourself senseless, to attribute such lofty titles to such love-trifles.

“*End.* My love is placed neither under the moon nor above.

“*Eum.* I hope you be not sotted upon the Man in the Moon.

“*End.* No; but settled either to die or possess the moon herself.

“*Eum.* Is Endymion mad, or do I mistake? Do you love the moon, Endymion?

“*End.* Eumenides, the moon.

“*Eum.* There was never any so peevish to imagine the moon either capable of affection or shape of mistress; for as impossible it is to make love fit to her humor, which no man knoweth, as a coat to her form, which continueth not in one bigness whilst she is measuring. Cease off, Endymion to feed so much upon fancies. That melancholy blood must be purged which

draweth you to a dotage no less miserable than monstrous.

"*End.* My thoughts have no veins, and yet, unless they be let blood, I shall perish.

"*Eum.* But they have vanities, which being reformed, you may be restored.

"*End.* O, fair Cynthia, why do others term thee inconstant whom I have ever found immovable? Injurious time, corrupt manners, unkind men, who, finding a constancy not to be matched in my sweet mistress, have christened her with the name of wavering, waxing, and waning! Is she inconstant that keepeth a settled course; which, since her first creation, altereth not one minute in her moving? There is nothing thought more admirable or commendable in the sea than the ebbing and flowing; and shall the moon, from whom the sea taketh this virtue, be accounted fickle for increasing and decreasing? Flowers in their buds are nothing worth till they be blown, nor are blossoms accounted till they be ripe fruit; and shall we then say they be changeable for that they grow from seeds to leaves, from leaves to buds, from buds to their perfection? Then, why be not twigs that become trees, children that become men, and mornings that grow to evenings, termed wavering, for that they continue not at one stay? Ay, but Cynthia, being in her fulness, decayeth, as not delighting in her greatest beauty, or

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

withering when she should be most honored. When malice cannot object anything, folly will, making that a vice which is the greatest virtue. What thing (my mistress excepted), being in the pride of her beauty and latter minute of her age, that waxeth young again? Tell me, Eumenides, what is he that having a mistress of ripe years and infinite virtues, great honors and unspeakable beauty, but would wish that she might grow tender again, getting youth by years, and never-decaying beauty by time; whose fair face neither the summer's blaze can scorch, nor winter's blast chap, nor the numbering of years breed altering of colors? Such is my sweet Cynthia, whom time cannot touch because she is divine, nor will offend because she is delicate. O Cynthia, if thou shouldst always continue at thy fullness, both gods and men would conspire to ravish thee. But thou, to abate the pride of our affections, dost detract from thy perfections, thinking it sufficient if once in a month we enjoy a glimpse of thy majesty; and then, to increase our griefs, thou dost decrease thy gleams, coming out of thy royal robes, wherewith thou dazzlest our eyes, down into thy swathe clouts, beguiling our eyes; and then——

“*Eum.* Stay there, Endymion; thou that committest idolatry, wilt straight blaspheme, if thou be suffered. Sleep would do thee more good than speech: the moon heareth thee not. or if she do, regardeth thee not.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

"*End.* Vain Eumenides, whose thoughts never grow higher than the crown of thy head! Why troublest thou me, having neither head to conceive the cause of my love nor heart to receive the impressions? Follow thou thine own fortunes, which creep on the earth, and suffer me to fly to mine, whose fall, though it be desperate, yet shall it come by daring. Farewell.

[*Exit.*

"*Eum.* Without doubt Endymion is bewitched; otherwise a man of such rare virtues there could not harbor a mind of such extreme madness. I will follow him, lest in this fancy of the moon he deprive himself of the sight of the sun.

[*Exit.*"]

It is not hard to guess that by Cynthia is meant Queen Elizabeth, and by Endymion, the Earl of Leicester, while it soon develops as the play goes on that it is an allegorical and fantastic presentation of the actual love episode between these two, so well known in history. Critics differ somewhat as to the interpretation of the allegory. The Rev. N. J. Halpin was the first to suggest in 1847 that "Endymion" is a political allegory, and he gave a list of identifications of the *Dramatis Personæ*, which has not, however, been adopted in full by later critics. Before looking at the play and its

interpretation it will be well to glance at the bare facts of history.

In May, 1573, the Earl of Leicester had been secretly married to Douglas Sheffield, widow of John, second baron of Sheffield. His feelings toward his bride changed ere long, and he offered her seven hundred pounds a year to ignore their relationship. The indignant Countess, however, refused this munificent offer, but nevertheless the Earl made love to Lettice, the widowed Countess of Essex, with whose late husband, Walter Devereux, he had been on very bad terms. Lady Essex was a friend of the Queen's and had interchanged gifts with her on New Year's day, 1578. She had also long been on intimate terms with Leicester, and had stayed at his castle, Kenilworth, during the festivities of 1575, while her husband was in Ireland.

In 1578, Leicester had finally abandoned all hope of the Queen's hand, and he then married Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex. The marriage ceremony was first performed at Kenilworth, and afterwards at Wanstead, in the presence of Leicester's brother, Warwick, Lord North, Sir Francis

Knollys, the lady's father and others. This marriage was kept secret from Queen Elizabeth, but in July, de Simier, the French ambassador, made use of his knowledge on the subject as a trump card in his negotiations for Alençon's marriage. He suddenly broke the news to Elizabeth, who at first seemed to be heartbroken, and three days afterwards promised to accept Alençon. She ordered Leicester to confine himself to the castle of Greenwich, and talked of sending him to the Tower. By the advice of Sussex, she decided against this stringent treatment, but, according to Leicester's friends, he voluntarily became a prisoner in his own chamber on the pretence of taking physic. It was stated at the time that the first anger of the Queen passed away in a month or two and Leicester seemed to be on good terms with her and was chosen with the Lord Treasurer and others to consider the marriage. The Queen's displeasure broke out again, however, toward the latter end of the year, and did not entirely pass away before July, 1580.

As we have seen, the play opens with Endymion, the chief noble of Cynthia's court hopelessly in

love with Cynthia, as Leicester was supposed to be with the Queen, whom for many years report said he had wished to marry.

In the next scene two friends, Tellus and Floscula talk over Endymion's love for Cynthia. Tellus is in love with Endymion. She determines to be revenged in some way, even to use enchantment if necessary, and no merciful word from Floscula can turn her from her purpose. Tellus breaks out:

" Treacherous and most perjured Endymion, is Cynthia the sweetness of thy life and the bitterness of my death? What revenge may be devised so full of shame as my thoughts are replenished with malice? Tell me, Floscula, if falseness in love can possibly be punished with extremity of hate? As long as sword, fire, or poison may be hired, no traitor to my love shall live unrevenged. Were thy oaths without number, thy kisses without measure, thy sighs without end, forged to deceive a poor credulous virgin whose simplicity had been worth thy favor and better fortune? If the gods sit unequal beholders of injuries, or laughers at lovers' deceptions, then let mischief be as well forgiven in women as perjury winked at in men.

" *Flosc.* Madam, if you would compare the state

of Cynthia with your own, and the height of Endymion's thoughts with the meanness of your fortune, you would rather yield than contend, being between you and her no comparison; and rather wonder than rage at the greatness of his mind, being affected with a thing more than mortal.

"*Tellus*. No comparison, Floscula? And why so? Is not my beauty divine, whose body is decked with fair flowers, and veins are vines, yielding sweet liquor to the dullest spirits; whose ears are corn, to bring strength; and whose hairs are grass, to bring abundance? Doth not frankincense and myrrh breathe out of my nostrils, and all the sacrifice of the gods breed in my bowels? Infinite are my creatures, without which neither thou, nor Endymion, nor any, could love or live.

"*Flosc*. But know you not, fair lady, that Cynthia governeth all things? Your grapes would be but dry husks, your corn but chaff, and all your virtues vain, were it not Cynthia that preserveth the one in the bud and nourisheth the other in the blade, and by her influence both comforteth all things, and by her authority commandeth all creatures: suffer, then, Endymion to follow his affections, though to obtain her be impossible, and let him flatter himself in his own imaginations, because they are immortal.

"*Tellus*. Loath I am, Endymion, thou shouldst

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

die, because I love thee well; and that thou shouldst live, it grieveth me, because thou lovest Cynthia too well. In these extremities, what shall I do? . Floscula, no more words; I am resolved. He shall neither live or die.

“*Flosc.* A strange practice, if it be possible.

“*Tellus.* Yes, I will entangle him in such a sweet net that he shall neither find the means to come out, nor desire it. All allurements of pleasure will I cast before his eyes, insomuch that he shall slake that love which he now voweth to Cynthia, and burn in mine of which he seemeth careless.

.

“He shall know the malice of a woman to have neither mean nor end; and of a woman deluded in love to have neither rule nor reason. I can do it; I must; I will!”

Floscula warns Tellus that:

“Affection bred by enchantment is like a flower that is wrought in silk,—in color and form most like, but nothing at all in substance or savor.”

To which Tellus replies:

“It shall suffice me if the world talk that I am favored of Endymion.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“*Flosc.* Well, use your will; but you shall find that love gotten with witchcraft is as unpleasant as fish taken with medicines unwholesome.

“*Tellus.* Floscula, they that be so poor that they have neither net nor hook will rather poison dough than pine with hunger; and she that is so oppressed with love that she is neither able with beauty nor wit to obtain her friend, will rather use unlawful means than try intolerable pains. I will do it.”

Upon this Floscula grieves that poor Endymion should have traps laid for him because he honors one that all the world wonders at.

The two ladies soon fall in, by chance, with Dipsas, a sorceress. Tellus immediately asks for help in her love affair, and the following conversation takes place:

“*Dipsas.* Fair lady, you may imagine that these hoary hairs are not void of experience, nor the great name that goeth of my cunning to be without cause. I can darken the sun by my skill and remove the moon out of her course; I can restore youth to the aged and make hills with bottoms; there is nothing that I cannot do but that only which you would have me do: and therein I differ from the gods, that I am not able to rule hearts; for were it in my power to place affection

by appointment, I would make such evil appetites, such inordinate lusts, such cursed desires, as all the world should be filled both with superstitious heats and extreme love.

“*Tellus*. Unhappy Tellus, whose desires are so desperate that they are neither to be conceived of any creature, nor to be cured by any art!

“*Dipsas*. This I can: breed slackness in love, though never root it out. What is he whom you love, and what she that he honoreth?

“*Tellus*. Endymion, sweet Endymion is he that hath my heart; and Cynthia,—too, too fair Cynthia,—the miracle of nature, of time, of fortune, is the lady that he delights in, and dotes on every day, and dies for ten thousand times a day.

“*Dipsas*. Would you have his love either by absence or sickness aslaked? Would you that Cynthia should mistrust him, or be jealous of him without color?

“*Tellus*. It is the only thing I crave, that, seeing my love to Endymion, unspotted, cannot be accepted, his truth to Cynthia, though it be unspeakable, may be suspected.

“*Dipsas*. I will undertake it, and overtake him, that all his love shall be doubted of, and therefore become desperate: but this will wear out with time that treadeth all things down by truth.”

At the beginning of the second act, Endymion's attitude toward Tellus is brought out in a long soliloquy.

“Endymion. O fair Cynthia! O unfortunate Endymion! Why was not thy birth as high as thy thoughts, or her beauty less than heavenly; or why are not thine honors as rare as her beauty, or thy fortunes as great as thy deserts? Sweet Cynthia, how wouldst thou be pleased, how possessed? Will labors, patient of all extremities, obtain thy love? There is no mountain so steep that I will not climb, no monster so cruel that I will not tame, no action so desperate that I will not attempt. Desirest thou the passions of love, the sad and melancholy moods of perplexed minds, the not-to-be-expressed torments of racked thoughts? Behold my sad tears, my deep sighs, my hollow eyes, my broken sleeps, my heavy countenance. Wouldst thou have me vowed only to thy beauty and consume every minute of time in thy service? Remember my solitary life almost these seven years. Whom have I entertained but mine own thoughts and thy virtues? What company have I used but contemplation? Whom have I wondered at but thee? Have I not crept to those on whom I might have trodden, only because thou didst shine upon them? Have not injuries been sweet to me, if thou vouchsafedst I should bear them? Have I not

spent my golden years in hopes, waxing old with wishing, yet wishing nothing but thy love? With Tellus, fair Tellus have I dissembled, using her but as a cloak for mine affections, that others, seeing my mangled and disordered mind, might think it were for one that loveth me, not for Cynthia, whose perfection alloweth no companion nor comparison. In the midst of these disordered thoughts of mine thou art not only jealous of my truth, but careless, suspicious, and secure; which strange humor maketh my mind as desperate as thy conceits are doubtful. I am none of those wolves that bark most when thou shinest brightest, but that fish (thy fish, Cynthia, in the flood Araris) which at thy waxing is as white as the driven snow, and at thy waning as black as deepest darkness. I am that Endymion, sweet Cynthia, that have carried my thoughts in equal balance with my actions, being always as free from imagining ill as enterprising; that Endymion whose eyes never esteemed anything fair but thy face, whose tongue termed nothing rare but thy virtues, and whose heart imagined nothing miraculous but thy government; yea, that Endymion, who, divorcing himself from the amiableness of all ladies, the bravery of all courts, the company of all men, hath chosen in a solitary cell to live, only by feeding on thy favor, accounting in the world—but thyself—nothing excellent, nothing immortal: thus mayest thou see every vein, sinew,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

muscle, and artery of my love, in which there is no flattery, nor deceit, error, nor art. But soft, here cometh Tellus. I must turn my other face to her, like Janus, lest she be as suspicious as Juno."

Tellus is supposed, of course, to be the Countess of Essex, in regard to whom Leicester made the excuse to the Queen that he had but used her as a cloak to his affections. When Tellus appears, Endymion addresses her in his most dissembling manner, but she is not in the least deceived by it, nor turned from her revengeful intentions. She says to her companions Floscula and Dipsas, at the same time, asking them to withdraw:

"Yonder I espy Endymion. I will seem to suspect nothing, but soothe him, that seeing I cannot obtain the depth of his love, I may learn the height of his dissembling."

Then she says to Endymion:

"How now, Endymion, always solitary? No company but your own thoughts, no friend but melancholy fancies?"

And the wily Endymion replies:

"You know, fair Tellus, that the sweet remembrance of your love is the only companion of my life, and thy

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

presence, my paradise; so that I am not alone when nobody is with me, and in heaven itself when thou art with me."

"*Tellus.* Then you love me, Endymion?"

"*End.* Or else I live not, *Tellus.*

"*Tellus.* It is not possible for you, Endymion, to dissemble?"

"*End.* Not, *Tellus*, unless I could make me a woman."

Tellus asks him if all women dissemble, to which he replies all but one, and who that is he dare not tell:

"For if I should say you, then would you imagine my flattery to be extreme; if another, then would you think my love to be but indifferent."

Tellus suggests that it is *Cynthia*, and *Endymion* cleverly parries this home thrust with the utmost of his dissembling art:

"You know, *Tellus*, that of the gods we are forbidden to dispute, because their deities come not within the compass of our reasons; and of *Cynthia* we are allowed not to talk but to wonder, because her virtues are not within the reach of our capacities."

Tellus responds:

"Take heed, lest like the wrestler in Olympia, that striving to lift an impossible weight caught an incurable strain, thou, by fixing thy thoughts above thy reach, fall into a disease without all secure. But I see thou art now in love with Cynthia."

Thus brought to bay Endymion rises to the occasion with a crowning falsehood:

"No, Tellus, thou knowest that the stately cedar, whose top reacheth unto the clouds, never boweth his head to the shrubs that grow in the valley; nor ivy, that climbeth up by the elm, can ever get hold of the beams of the sun: Cynthia I honor in all humility, whom none ought or dare adventure to love, whose affections are immortal, and virtues infinite. Suffer me, therefore, to gaze on the moon, at whom, were it not for thyself, I would die with wondering."

When we next see Endymion, the magic sleep, induced by the sorceries of Dipsas is coming on. All-unconscious of the mischief plotted against him, he exclaims:

"I will see if I can beguile myself with sleep, and if no slumber will take hold in my eyes, yet will I embrace the golden thoughts in my head, and wish to melt by

nursing; that as ebony, which no fire can scorch, is yet consumed with sweet savors, so my heart, which cannot be bent by the hardness of fortune, may be bruised by amorous desires. On yonder bank never grew anything but lunary, and hereafter I will never have anything but that bank. O Endymion, Tellus was fair. But what availeth beauty without wisdom? Nay, Endymion, she was wise. But what availeth wisdom without honor? She was honorable, Endymion, belie her not. Ay, but how obscure is honor without fortune. Was she not fortunate whom so many followed? Yes, yes, but base is fortune without majesty: thy majesty, Cynthia, all the world knoweth and wondereth at, but not one in the world that can imitate it or comprehend it. No more, Endymion. Sleep or die. Nay, die, for to sleep, it is impossible;—and yet I know not how it cometh to pass, I feel such a heaviness both in mine eyes and heart that I am suddenly benumbed, yea, in every joint. It may be weariness, for when did I rest? It may be deep melancholy, for when did I not sigh? Cynthia! Ay, so;—I say, Cynthia.”

Sleep overcomes him just as Dipsas and her servant, Bagoa, enter. They complete the charm between them. Dipsas says:

“ Little dost thou know, Endymion, when thou shalt wake, for hadst thou placed thy heart as low in love as

thy head lieth now in sleep, thou mightest have commanded Tellus, whom now, instead of a mistress, thou shalt find a tomb. These eyes must I seal up by art, not nature, which are to be opened neither by art nor nature. Thou that liest down with golden locks shalt not wake until they be turned to silver hairs; and that chin on which scarcely appeareth soft down shall be filled with bristles as hard as broom. Thou shalt sleep out thy youth and flowering time, and become dry hay before thou knowest thyself green grass; and ready by age to step into the grave when thou wakest, that wast youthful in the court when thou laidest thee down to sleep. The malice of Tellus hath brought this to pass, which if she could not have entreated of me by fair means, she would have commanded by menacing, for from her gather we all our simples to maintain our sorceries."

She bids Bagoa

"Fan with this hemlock over his face, and sing the enchantment for sleep, whilst I go in and finish these ceremonies that are required in our art. Take heed ye touch not his face, for the fan is so seasoned that whoso it toucheth with a leaf shall presently die, and over whom the wind of it breatheth, he shall sleep forever."

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Before the sleeping Endymion, a dumb show is now given, supposed to represent his dreams:

"Music sounds. Three ladies enter: one with a knife and a looking-glass, who, by the procurement of one of the other two, offers to stab Endymion as he sleeps; but the third wrings her hands, lamenteth, offering still to prevent it, but dares not. At last, the first lady looking in the glass, casts down the knife. [Exeunt the Three Ladies.

"Enters an ancient man with books with three leaves; offers the same twice. Endymion refuseth. He rendeth two, and offers the third, where he stands awhile; and then Endymion offers to take it.

[Exit the Old Man."

Cynthia now appears, and is much concerned over the long sleep of Endymion. Tellus makes such flippant remarks upon the subject that the ire of the Queen is aroused. To Cynthia's complimentary remark:

"I have had trial of Endymion, and conceive greater assurance of his age than I could hope of his youth,"

Tellus retorts:

"But timely, Madam, crooks that tree that will be a cammock, and young it pricks that will be a thorne;

and therefore he that began without care to settle his life, it is a sign without amendment he will end it."

Whereupon Cynthia exclaims:

"Presumptuous girl, I will make thy tongue an example of unrecoverable displeasure";

She orders her captain, Corsites, to carry Tellus off to the castle in the desert, there to remain and weave. This is an echo of the treatment accorded to Arachne in the old Greek story, except it was Athênê not Diana who meted out the punishment. Athênê, being displeased with Arachne for boasting herself the equal of the goddess, changed her into a spider, and decreed that forever after she should do nothing but spin. To Eumenides, who had expressed a willingness to do anything in his power to help Endymion out of his sleep, Cynthia, now turns:

"Eumenides, if either the soothsayers in Egypt, or the enchanters in Thessaly, or the philosophers in Greece, or all the sages of the world, can find remedy, I will procure it; therefore, dispatch with all speed: you, Eumenides, into Thessaly; you, Zontes, into Greece, because you are acquainted in Athens; you,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Panelion, to Egypt; saying that Cynthia sendeth, and if you will, commandeth."

Eumenides replies:

"On bowed knee I give thanks, and with wings on my legs I fly for remedy."

And Zontes:

"We are ready at your Highness' command, and hope to return to your full content."

Cynthia, who has, for a slight offense, just sent her woman friend to prison in the desert, now graciously remarks:

"It shall never be said that Cynthia, whose mercy and goodness filleth the heavens with joys and the world with marvel, will suffer either Endymion or any to perish, if he may be protected."

Corsites carries off Tellus to the desert, and takes the opportunity to express his love to her, but she assures him she means to make her loom her lover.

On his way to Thessaly, Eumenides falls in with Geron, who tells him he need not go so far to find

a cure for Endymion's sleep, for near by there is a fountain, and any one who is able to see clearly the bottom of it shall have remedy for any woe. Only the tears of a faithful lover can bring this miracle to pass, many have tried and failed. At last Eumenides, thinking of his beloved whose name is Semele, weeps copiously into the fountain, and behold he sees plainly the bottom of the well, and there in white marble engraven these words, "*Ask one for all, and but one thing at all,*" Eumenides has a struggle between his friendship and his love. Shall he ask that the fair Semele, may henceforth be kind to him, or shall he ask for Endymion's release from the power of magic. Finally, strengthened in his friendship by Geron's extravagant praises of friendship which he declares to be far superior to love, Eumenides questions the fountain:

"Sacred fountain, in whose bowels are hidden divine secrets, I have increased your waters with the tears of unspotted thoughts, and therefore let me receive the reward you promise: Endymion, the truest friend to me, and faithfullest lover to Cynthia, is in such a dead sleep that nothing can wake or move him."

In reply to these words he sees engraven upon the bottom of the well, the following cryptic utterance :

“ When she whose figure of all is the perfectest, and never to be measured; always one, yet never the same; still inconstant, yet never wavering; shall come and kiss Endymion in his sleep he shall then rise, else never.”

Eumenides is mystified until Geron helps him to an interpretation :

“ *Ger.* Is not a circle of all figures the perfectest?

“ *Eum.* Yes.

“ *Ger.* And is not Cynthia of all circles the most absolute?

“ *Eum.* Yes.

“ *Ger.* Is it not impossible to measure her, who still worketh by her influence, never standing at one stay?

“ *Eum.* Yes.

“ *Ger.* Is she not always Cynthia, yet seldom in the same bigness; always wavering in her waxing or waning, that our bodies might the better be governed, our seasons the dailier give their increase; yet never to be removed from her course, as long as the heavens continue theirs?

“ *Eum.* Yes.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“*Ger.* Then who can it be but Cynthia, whose virtues all being divine must needs bring things to pass that be miraculous? Go, humble thyself to Cynthia; tell her the success, of which myself shall be a witness. And this assure thyself, that she that sent to find means for his safety will now work her cunning.”

When we next see Endymion, Corsites has been dispatched by Tellus to remove him from the bank of lunary into some obscure cave, for which service she has promised to become the wife of Corsites. While Corsites is making unavailing efforts to raise the sleeping Endymion, a troop of Fairies comes in. They dance, and with a song, pinch Corsites, until he falls asleep. Then they kiss Endymion and depart, just as Cynthia and her train, among whom are Gyptes, an Egyptian Soothsayer, and Pythagoras, the Grecian philosopher enter. In reply to Cynthia's questioning as to the reason, or a remedy for Endymion's sleep, Pythagoras says:

“It is impossible to yield reason for things that happen not in the compass of nature. It is most certain that some strange enchantment hath bound all his senses ”;

and Gyptes, agreeing with Pythagoras, says:

“It is enchantment, and that so strange that no art can undo it, for that heaviness argueth a malice unremovable in the enchantress, and that no power can end it, till she die that did it, or the heavens show some means more miraculous.”

Shortly after this Eumenides arrives and relates his experiences to Cynthia. She modestly doubts whether she be the person signified by the writing in the sacred fountain, but Eumenides begs her to attempt the cure, whereupon Cynthia approaches Endymion.

“I will not be so stately, good Endymion, not to stoop to do thee good, and if thy liberty consist in a kiss from me, thou shalt have it; and although my mouth hath been heretofore as untouched as my thoughts, yet now to recover thy life, though to restore thy youth it be impossible, I will do that to Endymion which yet never mortal man could boast of heretofore, nor shall ever hope for hereafter.”

Eumenides addresses the resuscitated Endymion first, and brings him to a waking memory of himself now old and gray after a sleep of forty years; and Cynthia unbends so far as to say:



CYNTHIA.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

"Endymion, speak, sweet Endymion! Knowest thou not Cynthia?"

"*End.* O heavens, whom do I behold? Fair Cynthia, divine Cynthia?"

"*Cynth.* I am Cynthia, and thou Endymion."

Then he tells Cynthia his dreams:

"Methought I saw a lady passing fair, but very mischievous, who in one hand carried a knife with which she offered to cut my throat, and in the other a looking-glass, wherein seeing how ill anger became ladies, she refrained from intended violence. She was accompanied with other damsels, one of which, with a stern countenance, and as it were with a settled malice engraven in her eyes, provoked her to execute mischief; another, with visage sad, and constant only in sorrow, with her arms crossed, and watery eyes, seemed to lament my fortune, but durst not offer to prevent the force. I started in my sleep, feeling my very veins to swell and my sinews to stretch with fear, and such a cold sweat bedewed all my body that death itself could not be so terrible as the vision. . . . After long debating with herself, mercy overcame anger, and there appeared in her heavenly face such a divine majesty mingled with a sweet mildness that I was ravished with the sight above measure, and wished that I might have enjoyed the sight without end; and so she departed

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

with the other ladies, of which the one retained still an unmovable cruelty, the other a constant pity.

“*Cynth.* Poor Endymion, how wast thou affrighted! What else?

“*End.* After her, immediately appeared an aged man with a beard as white as snow, carrying in his hand a book with three leaves, and speaking, as I remember, these words: *Endymion, receive this book with three leaves, in which are contained counsels, policies, and pictures*, and with that he offered me the book and I rejected; wherewith, moved with a disdainful pity, he rent the first leaf in a thousand shivers. The second time he offered it which I refused also; at which, bending his brows, and pitching his eyes fast to the ground, as though they were fixed to the earth, and not again to be removed, then suddenly casting them up to the heavens, he tore in a rage the second leaf, and offered the book only with one leaf. I know not whether fear to offend or desire to know some strange thing moved me,—I took the book, and so the old man vanished.

“*Cynth.* What didst thou imagine was in the last leaf?

“*End.* There portrayed to life, with a cold quaking in every joint, I beheld many wolves barking at thee, Cynthia, who having ground their teeth to bite, did with striving bleed themselves to death. There

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

might I see Ingratitude with an hundred eyes gazing for benefits, and with a thousand teeth gnawing on the bowels wherein she was bred; Treachery stood all clothed in white, with a smiling countenance, but both her hands bathed in blood; Envy with a pale and meagre face (whose body was so lean that one might tell all her bones, and whose garment was so tattered that it was easy to number every thread), stood shooting at stars, whose darts fell down again on her own face. There might I behold drones or beetles—I know not how to term them—creeping under the wings of a princely eagle, who, being carried into her nest, sought there to suck that vein that would have killed the eagle.”

For the rest, when Cynthia hears who and what has caused all the woe, she asks Endymion if there had truly been a time when he had vowed himself to death for her love, he replies:

“There hath none pleased mine eye but Cynthia, none delighted mine ears but Cynthia, none possessed my heart but Cynthia. I have forsaken all other fortunes to follow Cynthia, and here I stand ready to die if it please Cynthia. Such a difference hath the gods set between our states that all must be duty, loyalty, and reverence; nothing (without your highness vouchsafe it) be termed love.”

Cynthia replies:

"Endymion, this honorable respect of thine shall be christened love in thee, and my reward for it favor. Persevere, Endymion, in loving me, and I account more strength in a true heart than in a walled city. I have labored to win all, and study to keep such as I have won; but those that neither my favor can move to continue constant, nor my offered benefits get to be faithful, the gods shall either reduce to truth, or revenge their treacheries with justice. Endymion, continue as thou hast begun and thou shalt find that Cynthia shineth not on thee in vain."

At these words Endymion regains his youth, and Cynthia, now being in an excellent humor, forgives everybody. Tellus is paired off with Cor-sites, and Semele, at last condescends to take Eumenides, while Endymion is vowed to a service to Cynthia from which "death cannot remove him."

The sleep of Endymion and the kiss of Cynthia are as a matter of fact the only elements of the myth made use of by Lyly, and these are not related in at all the same way that they are in the myth, but have been twisted about to suit the allegorical purpose of the author. Like most of the

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

allegories so fashionable as a literary form in that day, it cannot be interpreted at every point. The descriptions of Cynthia are constantly wavering between epithets suitable to a moon-goddess, and those suitable to an earthly, virgin queen, while there are often veiled allusions to the actual events in this bit of court history.

According to a recent writer, one of these veiled allusions occurs in the play where Tellus desires that though Endymion's love for Cynthia be "unspeakable," yet it should be suspected by the Queen. Dipsas promises that she will bring about the suspicion but that she has not the power to make it lasting. So de Simier's revelations to the Queen in regard to Leicester's marriage to the Countess of Essex are meant to arouse the Queen's suspicions against Leicester, and are in reality slanders against a man who has merely been seeking a way peacefully to maintain his absolute devotion to her. Nor could such misrepresentations fail to be detected in time. Lyly does not directly allegorize the denouncement of de Simier. That would be a somewhat dangerous experiment in a court, where there were many on the French

Count's side, but he does allegorize the conditions and the effects. De Simier simply took advantage of the unfortunate position in which Leicester had placed himself by his marriage to the Countess of Essex, and so took away as the Earl wrote in his letter of complaint to Burleigh, "Youth, liberty and all his future," thereby reducing him to helplessness because of bringing upon him the disfavor of the Queen.

The result was his confinement in the fort at Greenwich. The threatened removal to the Tower is evidently referred to in the later effort of Cor-sites to remove Endymion from the bank of lunary to a dark cave. The rescue through the efforts of Eumenides is, declares the same writer, but an elaborate allegorical version of the part played by the Earl of Sussex in releasing Leicester from his confinement at Greenwich? The two men were not actually friends, but they were fellow councillors, and the struggle of Eumenides between love and friendship is not unlike that with Sussex, who favored the marriage with the Duc d'Alençon,—between his sense of justice and his desire to see a rival and opponent overcome. Eu-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

menides goes to Cynthia as the only person capable of performing the miracle, just as Sussex, in behalf of Leicester, pleaded with the Queen as the only person who could release the Earl. The dream Endymion tells Cynthia, reads like a warning to all those in the court who favored the French marriage. The kiss of Cynthia is of course, the restoration of Endymion into favor.

No one can compare the court history of this matter with the play without being convinced that an allegory is intended. Even the more exaggerated interpretations where almost every incident in the play is paralleled with some actual event, have their fascination, but such a conservative interpretation as I have given is more likely to touch the truth of the author's intention. The partial allegory was a distinct feature of the literature of Lyly's time, and by using this especial form, Lyly was able to write a play which from beginning to end implies the most extravagant compliments to Queen Elizabeth and leaves out of the question or glozes over any of the unpleasant incidents connected with the episode. It is noteworthy, also, that the chief incident in the al-

legory, the long sleep of Endymion from which only the kiss of Cynthia can wake him, is just such a fancy as those with which the leading courtiers flattered the gullible Queen.

“To feign a dangerous distemper arising from the influence of her charms was deemed an effectual passport to her favor, and when she appeared displeased, the forlorn courtier took to his bed in a paroxysm of amorous despondency, and breathed out his tender melancholy in sighs and protestations.” *

Dean Church has described just such an allegory as Endymion when writing of the “Faery Queen.”

“There is a vein of what are manifestly contemporary allusions that breaks across the moral drift of the allegory with an apparently distinct yet obscured meaning, and one of which it is the work of dissertation to find the key. The personage is introduced with some feature or amid some circumstances which seem for a moment to fix the meaning. But when we look for the sequence of the story, we find ourselves thrown out. The real in person, incident, institution,

* See Introduction to Lyly's *Endymion*, by Geo. P. Baker.

shades off into the ideal; after showing itself by plain tokens, it turns aside out of its actual path of fact and ends, as the poet thinks it ought to end, in victory or defeat, glory or failure. There is an intentional dislocation of the parts of the story when they might make it independently close in its reflection of facts or resemblance in portraiture. A feature is shown, a manifest allusion made, and then the poet starts off in other directions, to confuse and perplex all attempts at interpretation, which might be too particular and too certain. This was no doubt merely according to the fashion of the time, and the habits of mind into which the poet had grown. But there were often reasons for it, in an age so suspicious and so dangerous to those who meddled with high matters of state."

An added interest is given to the play for an Elizabethan audience by sandwiching in between the main incidents of the play comedy scenes, in which the servants of the principal actors and some others take part.

These are quite outside of both myth and allegory and were no doubt thought to lend an in-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

timate human interest to an otherwise high-flown and somewhat mysterious production.

One cannot help feeling that such use of the chief actors in a beautiful myth results in the bringing of the things of the imagination down to a very mundane plane. Elizabeth does not appear to be glorified into a Cynthia, nor Leicester into an Endymion. On the contrary, the fair moon-goddess, and the sleeping shepherd boy seem to be treading the earth in the guise of mortals which no stretch of the imagination can picture as ideal.

It is a delight to turn from this sixteenth century court allegory to the nineteenth century fantasy of Keats wherein one is carried forward by intoxicating, if at times over luxurious leaps of the imagination toward a plane of calm and exalted aspiration.

At the time Keats started his "Endymion," he wrote to his little sister, Fanny:

"Perhaps you might like to know what I am writing about. I will tell you. Many years ago there was a young handsome Shepherd who fed his flocks on a mountain's Side called Latmos—he was a very contem-

plative sort of Person and lived solitary among the trees and Plains little thinking that such a beautiful Creature as the Moon was growing mad in Love with him.—However so it was; and when he was asleep on the Grass she used to come down from heaven and admire him excessively for a long time; and at last could not refrain from carrying him away in her arms to the top of that high Mountain Latmos while he was a dreaming—but I daresay you have read this and all the other beautiful Tales which have come down from the ancient times of that beautiful Greece.”

Later in writing to Benjamin Bailey he says of “Endymion”:

“It will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination, and chiefly of my invention, which is a rare thing indeed—by which I must make 4000 lines of one bare circumstance, and fill them with poetry: and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the temple of fame—it makes me say—God forbid that I should be without such a task.”

From his own attitude toward the myth may be gained beforehand some notion of the amplifications he has added to it. These are not so palpably in the direction of the development of the *content*

or meaning of the myth as in the development of incident and episode in a series of wonderful word paintings.

These episodes, it is true, have a distinct bearing upon the poet's conception of love, which will be more fully considered later, but they have also their own value, in many instances, merely as "simple, sensuous and passionate" descriptions, thus fulfilling what some critics have considered the utmost to which poetry can attain. The poem is in four books, each of which has a number of introductory lines giving the poet's own thought. *Endymion* is a rare type of the poetic temperament, given more to moods or states of being than to thought or action.

The key-note of the poetic temperament at its best is struck in the first line, which has become a commonplace of general talk, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," but few remember except the especial lovers of Keats how exquisitely the idea is carried on.

"Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Full of sweet dreams, and health and quiet breathing.
Therefore on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such, too, is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

“Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die."

So the poet prepares us for the beautiful story of Endymion, which he means to trace, and the very music of whose name has gone into his being. First he describes the country where Endymion, a king among shepherds lived, a fitting environment for the imaginative youth:

"Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into overhanging boughs, and precious fruits.
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content
Over the hills at every nightfall went.
Among the shepherds, 't was believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
From the white flock, but pass'd unworrièd
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: aye great his gains

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
Stems thronging all around between the swell
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops? through which a
dove
Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would move across the blue."

Then follows a description of a morning rite to the god Pan to which come all the shepherds and shepherdesses and their children. Included in the "goodly company" is:

"A venerable priest full soberly,
Begirt with minist'ring looks: alway his eye
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept.
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.

His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar."

Trooping after the priest, comes another crowd
of shepherds, and then Endymion, followed by a
multitude who uprear their voices to the clouds.
He comes in a fair-wrought car

" Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
And, for those simple times, his garments were
A chieftain king's; beneath his breast, half bare,
Was hung a silver bugle, and between
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd
To common lookers-on, like one who dream'd
Of idleness in groves Elysian:
But there were some who feelingly could scan
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,
Why should our young Endymion pine away! "

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The assembly now ranges itself in a circle
around the altar, silent and in awe:

“Endymion, too, without a forest peer,
Stood wan, and pale, and with an awed face,
Among his brothers of the mountain chase.”

Then the priest lifting up his aged hands in
their midst spake to them:

“ ‘Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!
Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
Whether descended from beneath the rocks
That overtop your mountains; whether come
From valleys where the pipe is never dumb;
Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze
Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge
Nibble their fill at ocean’s very marge,
Whose mellow reeds are touch’d with sounds for-
lorn
By the dim echoes of old Triton’s horn:
Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare
The srip, with needments, for the mountain air;
And all ye gentle girls who foster up
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup
Will put choice honey for a favor’d youth:
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide
 plains
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd
His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.' "

The shrine is heaped with teeming sweets, the
sacred fire enkindled, wine is poured upon the
earth in honor of the shepherd god, and while

“ Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
'Neath smothering parsley,”

the assembled shepherds and shepherdesses sing a
great chorus in praise of their presiding deity, Pan.

This hymn to Pan, addressing him first as the
forest god who takes delight in all the sights and
sounds of nature, invokes him at the end as the
symbol of a region of thoughts so subtle and so
universal that they cannot be imaged in the mind.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

It makes him the god of sub-conscious thought as it might be expressed in these days of psychological analysis.

“ Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge—see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

“ Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown—but no more: we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean! ”

The morning rite ends with a shout like thunder from the whole multitude, after which they

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

disperse, some to dance to "tunes forgotten," some, as they watched others pitching quoits, or drawing the bow, thinking over the sad tales of their land; the story of Hyacinthus or of Niobe and her children, or of the Argonauts "Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways." Others again joined the sober group around Endymion, the aged priest, and various ancient shepherds. These discoursed about their ethereal homes, from which they feel separated by only a fragile bar, and of what their duties there shall be, duties, which as described by the poet, suggest nothing more burdensome than the delightful work of the artist and poet:

"to nightly call

Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;
To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun's purple couch; to emulate
In minist'ring the potent rule of fate
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations;
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
Sweet poesy by moonlight."

From this, they pass on to the anticipation of personal bliss in Elysium—all telling their fond desires saving only Endymion:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
His quick-gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
Her lips with music for the welcoming.
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales:
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth
wind,
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;
And, ever after, through those regions be
His messenger, his little Mercury.
Some were athirst in soul to see again
Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
In times long past; to sit with them, and talk
Of all the chances in their earthly walk;
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,
Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
And shared their famish'd scrips.”

The poet turns his attention now more particularly to Endymion, who, it has been intimated from the first, is distraught, though

“ hourly had he striven
To hide the cankering venom, that had riven
His fainting recollections.”

His sister Peona, the dearest of all his friends, now takes loving charge of him. She carries him off in her little shallop to her own island bower, and there Endymion falls into a slumbrous rest while Peona watches over him; and the poet seizes the opportunity to apostrophize sleep, which seems to his imaginative temperament to be a veritable land of enchantment.

“ O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world
Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives? ”

The sleep does Endymion good. He wakes up in a mood so highly appreciative of his sister's ministering unto him, that he decides he will no longer pass his days alone and sad. The happy Peona expresses her gladness at this change in a

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

song to which she accompanies herself on the lute,
but still it is a lay,

“ More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange.”

At last Peona throws down her lute. She tells Endymion that it is vain for him to try to hide that he knows of things mysterious. She wonders if he has sinned against the heavenly powers, caught a Paphian dove, bent his bow against some deer herd sacred to Diana, or perhaps seen her naked limbs among the alders, which “is death.” But no, she thinks she can trace something more high and perplexing in his face. Endymion observes how pale Peona has become through her anxiety over the change so suddenly wrought in him, and decides to ease his breast of secret grief.

He describes how in a spot where he was wont to spend his evenings, suddenly there blossomed a magic bed of sacred ditamy and red poppies, how sitting down close by, he began to muse upon what it might mean, until his head grew dizzy and dis-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

traught. Then through the dancing poppies stole a breeze that softly lulled his soul. Visions came to him of colors, wings and bursts of spangly light, which became more strange and dim, and tumultuous until he fell asleep and dreamed a wondrous dream.

“ ‘ Methought I lay
Watching the zenith, where the milky way
Among the stars in virgin splendor pours;
And travelling my eye, until the doors
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
I became loth and fearful to alight
From such high soaring by a downward glance:
So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view:
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;
And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet; she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again.
To commune with those orbs, once more I raised
My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed
By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!
Whence that completed form of all completeness?
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?

Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun
Such follying before thee—yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orbéd brow;
The which were blended in, I know not how,
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call?

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell. The wind outblows
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
'T is blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,
Handfuls of daisies.'—'Endymion, how strange!
Dream within dream!'—'She took an airy range,
And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 't was too
much;

Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,
I felt upmounted in that region
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
That balances the heavy meteor-stone;—
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;
Such as ay muster where gray time has scoop'd

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side:
There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sigh'd
To faint once more by looking on my bliss—
I was distracted; madly did I kiss
The wooing arms which held me, and did give
My eyes at once to death: but 't was to live,
To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count
The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.
Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dared to press
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
And, at that moment, felt my body dip
Into a warmer air: a moment more,
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store
Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
And once, above the edges of our nest,
An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

“ ‘Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd me
In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a spark

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

That needs must die, although its little beam
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.
And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking ears,
And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies hung
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease
With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus!—
Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguised demon, missioned to knit

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:
Therefore I eager follow'd and did curse
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse
Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!
These things, with all their comfortings, are given
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
Of weary life.' "

Peona weeps and wonders over this strange account of a dream-experience. She struggles to devise some blame but feels that she could as soon have crushed the life away from a sick dove. She does, however, try to sting Endymion into a more healthy mood toward life, one in which, instead of dreaming of beauty unattainable, to close with "the ballad of his sad life, with sighs and an alas!" he will set his ambition upon the attainment of the actual in his own life.

“ ‘ Endymion!

Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon
Among the winds at large—that all may hearken! ’ ”

She exclaims with increasing eloquence, as well as sound sense,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ ‘ Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
Islands, and creeks, and amber fretted strands
With horses prancing o’er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not mount
Into these regions? The Morphean fount
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
Into its airy channels with so subtle,
So thin a breathing, not the spider’s shuttle,
Circled a million times within the space
Of a swallow’s nest-door, could delay a trace,
A tinting of its quality: how light
Must dreams themselves be; seeing they’re more
slight
Than the mere nothing that engenders them!
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?
Why pierce high-fronted honor to the quick
For nothing but a dream? ’ ”

Endymion is touched by Peona’s arguments,
“ amid his pains. He seemed to taste a drop of
manna-dew,” but he is not convinced. He de-

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

clares that he knows what it is to thirst for the world's praises and that nothing base, no merely slumberous phantasm could have changed him, but he has been touched by an immortal love; this sheds a new, a mystical light upon the things both of the imagination and the heart. His higher hope is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope, to fret at myriads of earthly wrecks. He asks "Wherein lies happiness?" and replies,—

“ ‘ In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space.’ ”

When we reach that state of poetic consciousness where we feel

“ ‘ Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot,—’ ”

that moment we have

“ ‘ septe
Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit's.’ ”

What follows on love and friendship is reminiscent of the converse on that subject between Geron

and Endymion in Lyly's "Endymion." Had Keats read it, one wonders, and did he consciously set out to show of how much finer fibre he was than Lyly, by placing love as the light which crowns all human emotion, the realm where the soul finds wings!

“ ‘ But there are

Richer entanglements, enthrallments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.
All its more ponderous and bulky worth
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
A steady splendor; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orbéd drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence
Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret: till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend,
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
So wingedly: when we combine therewith,
Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

That men, who might have tower'd in the van
Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark gray hood.
Just so may love, although 'tis understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth:
What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would
swell

To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

“ ‘ Now, if this earthly love has power to make
Men’s being mortal, immortal; to sleake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest whim
Seems all this poor endeavor after fame,
To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
A love immortal, all immortal, too.’ ”

He assures the bewildered Peona that these things are true, and allows her to see a little farther into his secret. Since his dream, his immortal love has twice appeared to him, thus he has come to doubt whether this first vision of her was all a dream. One of these encounters was in a deep hollow within the wood on the margin of a well, “ whose patient level peeps its crystal eye Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.” There he sat contemplating the wild figures of the clouds overhead, when a cloudy Cupid flew by. So plainly was it charactered, that no breeze could change it, and in happiness he prepared to follow it upon the open plain, when, behold!

“ ‘ A wonder, fair as any I have told—
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—
I started up, when lo! refreshfully,
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,
Wrapping all objects from my smother'd sight,
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.' ”

Again, he is plunged into the depths of misery
until a third time the lovely vision appears to him.
This time he hears her voice calling to him from
a cave:

“ ‘Endymion! the cave is secreter
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
No sigh but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
Of thy combing hand, the while it traveling clogs
And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.’ ”

He hurries into the cave but the swift moments
have fled, and now there are no more smiles for
him, he tells Peona, but neither will he wed sor-
row the “way to death; but patiently Bear up
against it.” His life shall be one of meditation.
“Aye, thou shalt see,” he exclaims,

“ ‘ Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;
 What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays
 Where’er I look: but yet, I’ll say ’tis naught—
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
 Already, a more healthy countenance?
 By this the sun is setting; we may chance
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car.’ ”

He takes Peona’s hand, they again step into the boat and push away from the land. Of how short a duration this mood is on the part of Endymion is soon revealed in the second book, though not before the poet has expressed his own feelings on the subject of love, which reach a climax in the lines expressing the superior value to the poet of tales of love over those of history:

“ ‘ What care, though owl did fly
 About the great Athenian admiral’s mast?
 What care, though striding Alexander past
 The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?
 Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
 The gluttoned Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning
 Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning
 Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
 Doth more avail than these: the silver flow

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear
Love's standard on the battlements of song.
So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legion'd soldiers.' "

Endymion, now to be taken by the poet through fresh imaginative experiences, has once more fallen into his mood of despondency. For many days he has been wandering in uncertain ways, and while sitting by a shady spring idly dabbling his fingers in the cold water which reaches his elbow, he espies upon a wild rose tree a bud that snares his fancy. He plucks it, dips it in the water, it swells, and buds and flowers beneath his sight, and in the middle he discovers a golden butterfly. Endymion, his limbs unloosed "from languor's sul-len bands," gladly follows this swift little herald

until it reaches a splashing fountain's side near a cavern's mouth when, first soaring aloft into the air, it then dips into the fountain, and to the bewilderment of Endymion disappears. He looks for it, but instead of the butterfly he sees a nymph and hears her voice. She has risen above the fountain. She kisses her hand to him and tells him she would give every treasure she has in the world to help him in his sorrow if she could, but all she can do, being but a child is to pity him and explain to him the situation,—

“ ‘ that on this day
I've been thy guide; that thou must wander far
In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell! ’ ”

Out of the emotion of this episode are born thoughts to Endymion about human life in general, and his own life so different and apart. Men set for themselves ideals which they essay to realize, but disappointment and anxiety await them.

Still Imagination's struggles bear in themselves
this good,

“ ‘ That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is.’ ”

He goes on to show how this life of the world
is not for him,—

“ ‘ Where soil is, men grow,
Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in: I can see
Naught earthly worth my compassing; so stand
Upon a misty, jutting head of land—
Alone? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to 't,
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
But the soft shadow of my thrice seen love,
Than be—I care not what.’ ”

In despair he begs help from the moon-goddess
Cynthia, for he is not yet aware that it is Cynthia
herself who loves him:

“ ‘ O meekest dove
Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair!
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared!
Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment spared,
Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self: but rather tie
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!
How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!—my spirit fails—
Dear goddess, help! or the wide gaping air
Will gulf me—help!— At this, with madden'd
stare,
And lifted hands, and trembling lips, he stood;
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.
And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone;
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: 'Descend,

Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world!
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd
As from thy threshold; day by day hast been
A little lower than the chilly sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being: now, as deep profound
As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd
With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,
The silent mysteries of earth, descend!'

He heard but the last words, nor could contend
One moment in reflection: for he fled
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness."

Down in these fearful deeps he sees many marvels which may be guessed at from the two lines

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ A dusky empire and its diadems;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.”

After wandering about for some time in the courts and passages of this mysterious realm, he begins to long for the upper air again, and he, therefore, traces his steps back to a marble statue of Diana, which he had already seen, and against which in reverence he had touched his forehead. He now prays to the marble goddess to release him :

“ ‘ Within my breast there lives a choking flame—
O let me cool it the zephyr-boughs among!
A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
O let me slake it at the running springs!
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—
O let me once more hear the linnet’s note!
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—
O let me ’noint them with the heaven’s light!
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?
O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!
Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry juice?
O think how this dry palate would rejoice!
If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
O think how I should love a bed of flowers!—
Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!
Deliver me from this rapacious deep!’ ”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The prayer is not answered directly, but soon flowers grow up in profusion before his steps, through the slabs of the pavement, soft music falls upon his ear, he wanders on in his fairy journey until he comes to

“ A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,
And more of beautiful and strange beside:
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds.

.

Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently,
One, kneeling to a lyre touch'd the strings,
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber; while another took
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair; another flew
In through the woven roof, and fluttering wise
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.”

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

From the Cupid with the lyre, who invites Endymion to recline upon a bed of living flowers, he receives fruit and wine. He also learns from the Cupid the story of Adonis, who is the sleeping youth. He passes through his winter sleep, which is symbolic of the sleep of vegetation during the winter, "safe in the privacy of this still region." The description of the awakening of Adonis is one of the loveliest pictures in the poem.

“ Then there was a hum
Of sudden voices, echoing, ‘ Come! come!
Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk’d
Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk’d
Full soothingly to every nested finch:
Rise, Cupids! or we’ll give the bluebell pinch
To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!’
At this, from every side they hurried in,
Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
And doubling overhead their little fists
In backward yawns. But all were soon alive:
For, as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
In nectar’d clouds and curls through water fair,
So from the arbor roof down swell’d an air
Odorous and enlivening; making all
To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green
Disparted, and far upward could be seen
Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill
On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
Nestle and turn uneasily about.
Soon were the white doves plain, with necks stretch'd
out,
And silken traces lighten'd in descent;
And soon, returning from love's banishment
Queen Venus leaning downward open arm'd:
Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
A tumult to his heart, and a new life
Into his eyes."

Love, himself, among all that concourse, was
alone unmoved by this joyous meeting, for he

“stands superb to share
The general gladness: awfully he stands:
A sovereign quell is in his waving hands;
No sight can bear the lightning of his bow;
His quiver is mysterious, none can know
What themselves think of it; from forth his eyes
There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes:
A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
Look full upon it feel anon the blue
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.”

The goddess Venus perceives Endymion. She tells him she knows of his love for some goddess, yet who it is she cannot say for of all things this has been kept most secret in the Olympian realms, but she assures him that one day he will be blest, and bids him obey the guiding hand that fends him safely through these wonders for sweet ends.

Travelling onwards, Endymion sees so many dazzling marvels intermingled with strange gloomy caverns that he is beginning to feel unutterably lonely and dreary when something else happens to attract his almost surfeited powers for the assimilation of the marvelous:

“Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
 Came mother Cybele! alone—alone—
 In sombre chariot; dark foldings thrown
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,
 With turrets crown'd. Four manèd lions hale
 The sluggish wheels; solemn their toothèd maws,
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
 Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
 In another gloomy arch.”

After this, having lost his way in middle air, he calls upon Jupiter, who sends the sacred eagle to his help. Upon its wings he is borne down, down until he is landed in a Jasmine bower, "all bestrown with golden moss."

All these wonderful sights and experiences have been but the prelude to the most wonderful experience of all, his fourth meeting with the goddess of his dreams. There is an ecstatic love scene, in which Endymion and the immortal beloved of his soul tell each other of their devotion in an artlessly human fashion. She tells him she cannot reveal to him who she is: it must still remain a secret, for she fears Jove's frown, Minerva's surprise. She feels that her crystalline dominion is half lost, and all old hymns—those which celebrate her as the Virgin Huntress—made null, but love she assures him is more than all to her. She promises,—

" Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade
Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;
And I will tell thee stories of the sky
And breathe the whispers of its minstrelsy.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

My happy love will overwing all bounds!
O let me melt into thee; let the sounds
Of our close voices marry at their birth;
Let us entwine hoveringly—O dearth
Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!
Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach
Thine honey'd tongue—lute-breathings, which I gasp
To have thee understand——”

Sleep here comes upon Endymion. When he awakes, the goddess is gone and he is again left alone. He thinks over his past life, his former ambitions, his sister's sorrow, but all are as nothing compared with his love. These thoughts come to him in a sounding grotto by the sea, and as he lies there he overhears the wooing of the fountain Arethusa, one of Diana's nymphs, by the stream Alpheus. There is a touch of humor here. Diana exacted from all her nymphs eternal maidenhood. Arethusa will not listen to the love of Alpheus because she fears the anger of Diana. She exclaims:

“ ‘What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands
Severe before me: persecuting fate!
Unhappy Arethusa! thou wast late

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

A huntress free in—' At this, sudden fell
Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,
Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
The name of Arethusa. On the verge
Of that dark gulf he wept, and said: ' I urge
Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;
And make them happy in some happy plains.' "

Thus, unwittingly he asks his goddess, the same
that Arethusa knows as severe, to help her nymph.

All the magical beauty in the depths of the earth
become the imaginative possession of Endymion
in the second book of the poem. In the third, his
experiences take him through the equally marvel-
ous realms of the sea.

The poet's introductory lines, enlarge upon the
worthlessness of earthly thrones and kingdoms in
comparison with the wonders of nature,

" In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne."

Many have not bared their operations to this
globe, but among those which have, he swears the
Moon is the gentlier-mightiest.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

He eulogizes the beauty and power of the Moon as a natural object, then passes on to praise of her in her goddess aspect of Cynthia, gliding on to her influence upon Endymion, who is always deeply moved when he sees the Moon, though he never guesses his own goddess to be the moon-goddess. The poet takes up the thread of the story again at the moment when Cynthia sends a moon-beam to the deep, deep water world to find Endymion, where faring on his fated way he had seen so many awesome things—helmets and breast-plates of gone sea-warriors, rudders that for a hundred years had not felt the touch of a human hand, skeletons of man, beast, behemoth, leviathan, and many other horrors—that had it not been for Cynthia's help he might have died. Cheered by the moon-beam, he addresses a long invocation to the Moon, asking her pardon that he should have turned away from her for the sake of love:

“ ‘What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst
move

My heart so potently? When yet a child
I oft have dried my tears when thou has smiled:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we went
From eve to morn across the firmament.
No apples would I gather from the tree,
Till thou hadst cooled their cheeks deliciously:
No tumbling water ever spake romance,
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance:
No woods were green enough, no bower divine,
Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine:
In sowing-time ne'er would I dibble take,
Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake;
And, in the summer time of blossoming,
No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
No melody was like a passing spright
If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain
By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
With all my ardors; thou wast the deep glen;
Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's pen—
The poet's harp—the voice of friends—the sun;
Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won;
Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast my
steed—
My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed.—
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!
O what a wild and harmonized tune

My spirit struck from all the beautiful!
 On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
 Myself to immortality: I prest
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.
 But gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss—
 My strange love came—Felicity's abyss!
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—
 Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power
 Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind,
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
 My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive
 That I can think away from thee and live!—
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!
 How far beyond! ' "

At this moment Endymion sees sitting far out
 to sea an old man, calm and peaceful. His aged
 bones are wrapped in a most extraordinary cloak:

“ Every ocean-form
 Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,
 Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted shore
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell,
Yet look upon it, and 't would size and swell
To its huge self; and the minutest fish
Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
And show his little eye's anatomy.
Then there was pictured the regality
Of Neptune; and the sea-nymphs round his state,
In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait."

This ancient man turns out to be Glaucus, who tells a mournful tale of his past; how he was once a fisherman on the ocean shore, how he was a lonely youth with lonely sports, how the crown of all his life was utmost quietude:

" More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!
There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,
Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep:
And never was a day of summer shine,
But I beheld its birth upon the brine:
For I would watch all night to see unfold
Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold

Wide o'er the swelling streams: and constantly
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
 With daily boon of fish most delicate:
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach."

Unfortunately he became discontented with his life and longed to have the freedom of Neptune's realm. So at last he plunged into the sea, and found the experience delightful enough until he met with the fair Scylla with whom he immediately fell in love. But Scylla was timid, and as he relates,

" ' She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory,
 From where large Hercules wound up his story
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear:
 Until 't was too fierce agony to bear; ' "

In this extremity, he goes to the enchantress Circe, with the idea that she can help him. But instead of helping him, she casts her spells over him,

and lures him with her charms; he sinks to the depths of sensuality, from which he awakes in despair, and begging Circe to release him is, instead, cursed by her in a spasm of hate and bitter sarcasm:

“ ‘ Sea-flirt!

Young dove of the waters! truly I'll not hurt
One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,
That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.
Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
And speak a blessing: Mark me! thou hast thews
Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:
But such a love is mine, that here I chase
Eternally away from thee all bloom
Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast;
And there, ere many days be overpast,
Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then
Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;
But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeath
Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.' ”

Finding himself soon after near his native home,
he battles with the sea in blind rage, while yet

he retains his strength and in the midst of this warfare, he touches with his hand a dead thing's face, Scylla's, upon whom Circe had thus wreaked her vengeance.

“ ‘ Cold, O cold indeed

Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed
The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was
I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass
Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold!
'T was vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;
And all around— But wherefore this to thee
Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?—
I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.
My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became
Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.' ”

After this the old man spent a cruel space without one hope until one day he had a strange experience. He saw a gallant vessel upon the horizon's brink wrecked in a mighty storm. While, full of pity, he was yet unable, because of his

crazed age, to help the poor struggling souls whose cries he could hear amid the loud thunder. As he was gazing on the surges with many a scalding tear, there emerged at his feet an old man's hand, grasping a scroll and wand. He reached out his hand and snatched these treasures, the hand sank, and the storm soon after abated. He found that the book treated of strange matters, which drew him on page after page until his soul was well nigh won into forgetfulness of his woe, when, he says,

“ ‘ Stupefied,

I read these words, and read again, and tried
My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
O what a load of misery and pain
Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope
Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!
For thou hast brought their promise to an end!
*In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch
His loath'd existence through ten centuries,
And then to die alone. Who can devise
A total opposition? No one. So
One million times ocean must ebb and flow,*

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

*And be oppressed. Yet he shall not die,
 These things accomplish'd:—If he utterly
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;
 If he explores all forms and substances
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;
 He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief
 Most piously;—all lovers tempest-tost,
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,
 He shall deposit side by side, until
 Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
 Which done, and all these labors ripened,
 A youth by heavenly power loved and led,
 Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
 How to consummate all. The youth elect
 Must do the thing, or both will be destroyed.—' "*

It is now but a short time before Endymion has entered with Glaucus the crystal palace of Scylla where innumerable lines of poor lovers are lying in death "at rest from joys and woes," placed there by Glaucus in pursuance of the task given him. Endymion's part is to reanimate all these lovers including Scylla, and to bring back youth to Glaucus, which he does by means of the enchant-

ment furnished him by Glaucus. It consists of small fragments of the book which Glaucus had torn up. When the prone lovers are sprinkled with this charm, they immediately start to life. Glaucus and Endymion are speechless with delight.

“ They eyed each other, and about
The fair assembly wandered to and fro,
Distracted with the richest overflow
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

—‘ Away! ’

Shouted the new-born god; ‘ Follow, and pay
Our piety to Neptunus supreme! ’—
Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,
They led on first, bent to her meek surprise
Through portal columns of a giant size
Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
Down marble steps; pouring as easily
As hour-glass sand—and fast, as you might see
Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.
Thus went that beautiful multitude nor far,
Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar
Just within ken, they saw descending thick
Another multitude. Whereat more quick

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,
And of those numbers every eye was wet;
For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,
Like what was never heard in all the throes
Of wind and waters: 't is past human wit
To tell; 't is dizziness to think of it."

After travelling for many a league through the depths of the sea this beautiful multitude at last arrives at the palace of Neptune where there are more marvels to behold. Venus sat there enthroned on the left of Neptune while winged Love himself, stood on his right. Venus is again mindful of Endymion's pain, and tells him of her continued interest in his affairs:

“ ‘ Since the hour
I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
Escaped from dull Mortality's harsh net?
A little patience, youth! 't will not be long,
Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,
A humid eye, and steps luxurious,
Where these are new and strange are ominous.
Aye, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
When others were all blind; and were I given

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

To utter secrets, haply I might say
Some pleasant words:—but Love will have his day.
So wait awhile expectant.' ”

A glorious revelry next begins before the Water Monarch, dancing and music and feasting, ending in a hymn in which Neptune, Venus and Cupid are all addressed. Before the hymn ends, amid great clamor, the golden palace door opens and in glides Oceanus and Thetis and Amphion and other sea deities. Poor Endymion is by this time almost overcome with the splendor of his experiences, “seeing he was far strayed from Mortality.” He calls upon Venus to help him and sinks at Neptune’s feet.

“ A sudden ring
Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
To usher back his spirit into life:
But still he slept. At last they interwove
Their cradling arms, and purposed to convey
Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,
To his inward senses these words spake aloud;
Written in starlight on the dark above:

*'Dearest Endymion! my entire love!
How have I dwelt in fear of fate; 't is done—
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!'*

The youth at once arose: a placid lake
Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,
Cooler than all the wonders he had seen,
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
How happy once again in grassy nest!"

But his troubles are not yet by any means over. His final experience is his love for a charming maiden whose complaints he hears as he is offering up a hecatomb of vows to heaven. He is so captivated by her beauty, that his goddess-love becomes somewhat dimmed in his consciousness, and after the manner of the most commonplace of mankind he immediately tries to make a compromise with his own soul:

"Upon a bough
He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
Thirst for another love: O impious,
That he can even dream upon it thus!—

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Thought he, ' Why am I not as are the dead,
Since to a woe like this I have been led
Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous
sea ?

Goddess! I love thee not the less, from thee
By Juno's smile I turn not—no, no, no—
While the great waters are at ebb and flow.—
I have a triple soul! O fond pretence—
For both, for both my love is so immense,
I feel my heart is cut for them in twain.' ”

The maiden sings a long sorrowful roundelay,
which completely conquers the wavering Endymion:

“ O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!
Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her:
And listened to the wind that now did stir
About the crisped oaks full drearily,
Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
Remember'd from its velvet summer song.
At last he said: ' Poor lady, how thus long
Have I been able to endure that voice?
Fair Melody! kind Siren! I've no choice;
I must be thy sad servant evermore:
I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.

Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no!
 Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be so?
 Say beautifullest, shall I never think?
 O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink
 Of recollection! Make my watchful care
 Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!
 Do gently murder half my soul, and I
 Shall feel the other half so utterly!—
 I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;
 O let it blush so ever! let it soothe
 My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm
 With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.—
 This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is;
 And this is sure thine other softling this
 Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!
 Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!
 And whisper one sweet word that I may know
 This is this world—sweet dewy blossom! '—*Woe!*
Woe! woe to that Endymion! Where is he?
 Even these words went echoing dismally
 Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,
 Like one repenting in his latest moan;
 And while it died away a shade pass'd by,
 As of a thundercloud."

The two sit waiting for destruction, when lo,
 Mercury alights upon the earth. From the turf

spring two jet-black steeds with large dark blue wings, the result of the god's magic. Endymion places his lady upon one and himself mounts the other. Upon these steeds they take an airy flight into Olympian regions. Endymion enjoys himself greatly among the Immortals. He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow, braces Pallas' shield upon his arm, strives to wield a Jovian thunderbolt, blows a bugle, to the music of which the Seasons and the Shadowy Hours dance, and when he asks whose it is, they smile and say,

“ ‘ O Dis !

Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know
Its mistress' lips? Not thou?—'T is Dian's: lo!
She rises crescented! ' He looks, 't is she,
His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;
Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring
Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,
Beheld awake his very dream: the gods
Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;
And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.”

He has another struggle between the goddess and the maiden on the steed beside him, which

ends by his pledging his vows solely to her. As they fly on their steeds through the night, the Moon rises and exerts a curious influence upon the maiden :

“ No bigger than an unobserved star,
Or tiny point of fairy scimeter;
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd
This beauty in its birth—Despair! despair!
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seized her wrist;
It melted from his grasp; her hand he kiss'd,
And, horror! kiss'd his own—he was alone.
Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
Dropt hawk-wise to the earth.”

From the pain of this episode Endymion is beneficently saved by falling asleep upon his steed and dreaming he hears a pinion'd multitude warbling as it passes him in bright array the following song:

“ ‘ Who, who from Dian’s feast would be away?

For all the golden bowers of the day
Are empty left? Who, who away would be
From Cynthia’s wedding and festivity?
Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings
He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—

Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too!
Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill

 Your baskets high

With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,
Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,
Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;
Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
All gather’d in the dewy morning: hie

 Away! fly, fly!—

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given
Two liquid pulse streams ’stead of feather’d wings,
Two fanlike fountains,—thine illuminings

 For Dian play:

Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
Show cold through watery pinions; make more bright
The Star-Queen’s crescent on her marriage night:

Haste, haste away!—

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!
And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:
A third is in the race! Who is the third,
Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?

The ramping Centaur!

The Lion's mane's on end: the Bear how fierce!
The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce
Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent
Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,

Pale unrelentor,

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a-playing.—
Andromeda! sweet woman! why delaying
So timidly among the stars: come hither!
Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither

They all are going.

Danaë's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,
Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.
Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:
Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing.—

By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!—”

Endymion hears no more. His steed bears him
down to earth where he finds the maiden awaiting
him, and again pledges himself to her for his life,
but declares his love is still for his dream:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ ‘ It is thy voice—divinest! Where?—who? who
Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?
Behold upon this happy earth we are;
Let us aye love each other; let us fare
On forest-fruits, and never, never go
Among the abodes of mortals here below,
Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny!
Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,
But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
Where didst thou melt to? By thee will I sit
For ever: let our fate stop here—a kid
I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid
Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses. I have clung
To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream! Oh, I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired: so my story
Will I to children utter, and repent.
There never lived a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starved and died. My sweetest Indian, here,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing: gone and past
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast
My love is still for thee. The hour may come
When we shall meet in pure elysium.
On earth I may not love thee; and therefore
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store
All through the teeming year: so thou wilt shine
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
And bless our simple lives.' "

But in the end the damsel refuses his love. She exclaims:

" ' I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—
Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
By things I tremble at, and Gorgon wrath.
Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth
Ask me no more! I may not utter it,
Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die.
No, no that shall not be: thee will I bless,
And bid a long adieu.' "

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Love-lorn and silent, they wander off together, Peona meets them. She tries to persuade them to be happy together, but Endymion's mind is at last finally made up. He decides to be a hermit devoted to the service of Cynthia:

“ ‘ Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,
Of Jubilee to Dian:—truth I heard!
Well then, I see there is no little bird,
Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,
Behold I find it! so exalted too!
So after my own heart! I knew, I knew
There was a place untenanted in it;
In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
With sanest lips I vow me to the number
Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,
With thy good help, this very night shall see
My future days to her fane consecrate.’ ”

As he says adieu to the maiden and Peona, he suddenly decides he must see them once more. He begs them to come the next evening into those holy, silent grooves “ Behind great Dian's temple.” He spends the day in a sort of corpse-like stupor save when he occasionally lifts his eyes

abroad to watch the shadows pass the river. When evening comes,

“ Then up he rose,
And, slowly as that very river flows,
Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament:
' Why such a golden eve? The breeze is sent
Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
Before the serene father of them all
Bows down his summer head below the west.
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
But at the setting I must bid adieu
To her for the last time. Night will strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves
To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbor-roses;
My kingdom 's at its death, and just it is
That I should die with it: so in all this
We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heart-break, woe,
What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe
I am but rightly served.' So saying, he
Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;
Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
As though they jests had been: nor had he done
His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And then his tongue with sober seemlihed
Gave utterance as he enter'd: ' Ha ! ' I said,
' King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
Myself to things of light from infancy;
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
Is sure enough to make a mortal man
Grow impious.' So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be found;
Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
Beyond the reach of music: for the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough brier
Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight
By chilly-finger'd spring. ' Unhappy wight !
Endymion ! ' said Peona, ' we are here !
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier ? '
Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand
Press'd, saying: ' Sister, I would have command,
If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate.'
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
 To Endymion's amaze: ' By Cupid's dove,
 And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth! '
 And as she spake, into her face there came
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
 Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
 Dawn'd blue, and full of love. Aye, he beheld
 Phœbe, his passion! joyous she upheld
 Her lucid bow, continuing thus: ' Drear, drear
 Has our delaying been; but foolish fear
 Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;
 And then 't was fit that from this mortal state
 Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-for change
 Be spiritualized. Peona, we shall range
 These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
 As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee
 To meet us many a time.' Next Cynthia bright
 Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night:
 Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
 Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
 She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
 Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
 They vanish'd far away!—Peona went
 Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment."

Thus, after all this struggle of the spirit between his human and divine love, they turn out to be the same.

The poem is, on the whole, somewhat incoherent, and so laden at times with sensuous imagery as to be cloying. The need for constant invention upon what he himself called a single bare incident causes the wheels of his imagination to creak now and then, yet when all is said of its faults, there is enough of the intrinsically beautiful in it to furnish forth half a dozen ordinary poets. It is like a musical phantasy in which the themes are sleep full of fanciful dreams and the waking dreams and visions of the poet. These themes are twined and inter-twined in endless harmonies, for the better showing forth of the beauty of love in all its phases; worshipful, as Endymion's is for Diana, the moon-goddess, before he knows that it is she who loves him; passionate, as it becomes for the ideal of his vision, tender as it is for the maiden that seems but human, and spiritual, as it is in the end when through "translation" to upper spheres, he at last wins his ideal. His various imaginative and dream experiences

each end in the development of an added phase in his power of loving. His experience as a shepherd delighting in the beauties of nature among them the Moon which he worships as a far removed goddess, an abstract ideal of beauty—leads to his vision of an unattainable personal ideal who loves him, and whom he loves with ardent devotion, but not with the whole possibilities of his nature. What he sees and hears and feels in the depths of the earth, the climax of which is his vision or dream of the love of Venus and Adonis, symbolizing the resurrection of Spring, develops the passionate desire for the possession of the one beloved, and upon this follows the most ecstatic meeting which has as yet occurred between Endymion and his mysterious goddess. What he sees and hears and feels in the depths of the sea, especially his magical work in reanimating myriads of dead lovers, develops in him a more human attitude toward love—the need to help and protect, and the need for the solace of daily tenderness and affection, which he has an immediate opportunity to experience. His struggle between these two aspects of love, spiritualizes his love for



ARTEMIS GAZING UPON THE SLEEPING ENDYMION.

his ideal, at the same time that it causes the blossoming of his larger nature. This is the last phase to be attained in his development, and the way for the perfect realization of his aspirations now opens. He is at last fitted to be the consort of his goddess, who has responded to him in every stage of his growth, and whose nature, combining the divine and the human, demanded this unfolding of Endymion's whole being before she could raise him to the spiritual plane by her side.

It is very possible that Keats did not distinctly formulate in his own mind any such ideal of growth for Endymion. There is a passage, however, in a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, written the same spring that *Endymion* was published, which shows how in his thoughts about human life, he recognized there were different periods of development as distinctly marked off as the Earth and Sea regions in which Endymion goes through his experiences. He writes:

"I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me—The first we

step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us—We no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there forever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness, and oppression—Whereby this Chamber of Maiden-Thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil—we are in a mist—we are now in that state.—We feel the 'burden of the Mystery.' ”

In another letter written to Benjamin Bailey, during the composition of *Endymion*, he expresses himself so strongly on the side of sensation as opposed to thought that one wonders whether he had

yet, himself, entered the chamber of thought. He writes:

“ I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream,—he awoke and found it truth:—I am more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his Goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of Sensation rather than of Thoughts! It is ‘a Vision in the form of Youth,’ a shadow of reality to come—And this consideration has further convinced me,—for it has come as auxiliary to another favorite speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone—And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation, rather than hunger as you do after Truth. Adam's dream will do here, and seems to be a Conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection, is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. But, as I was saying, the Simple

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent Working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine Suddenness—to compare great things with small, have you never by being surprised with an old Melody, in a delicious place by a delicious voice, *felt* over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul?—do you not remember forming to yourself the Singer's face—more beautiful than it was possible, and yet with the elevation of the moment you did not think so? Even then you were mounted on the wings of Imagination so high that the prototype must be hereafter—that delicious face you will see.”

Up to the time of writing “Endymion” and for a little time after, Keats had never experienced any deep emotion; frequently he expresses in his letters his disappointment in women, due very largely to the fact of his imaginative conception of them, as he writes:

“I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women—at this moment, I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot—Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish Imagination? When I was a school-boy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though

she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality—I thought them ethereal above men—I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small.”

These letters show how wholly the ideals of Beauty evolved in “Endymion” were the result of imaginative emotion on the part of Keats, rather than of experience, and how, moreover any development in the ideal was the outcome of an intuitive perception of the heights to which Beauty might attain rather than of any conscious course of reasoning. Not long after the publication of “Endymion,” love came upon him with the force which it must necessarily exercise upon a temperament like his. He quite forgot how he had recently declared that

“Though the most beautiful creature were waiting for him at the end of a Journey or a Walk; though the Carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the Morning Clouds; the Chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnet’s down; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel—or rather my happiness would not be so fine, as my Solitude is sublime—The roaring of the wind is my

wife and the Stars through the window pane are my children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness. . . . I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds—No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my spirit the office which is equivalent to a King's bodyguard—their Tragedy with sceptered pall comes sweeping by! According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches, or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I throw my whole being into Troilus, and repeating those lines, 'I wander like a lost Soul upon the stygian Banks staying for waftage,' I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things, combined with the opinion I have of the generality of women—who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar Plum than my time, form a barrier against Matrimony which I rejoice in."

Poor Keats! When the woman who could dissipate all his cloud-capped palaces into thin mist was finally revealed to him, disease and death put an effectual barrier to matrimony.

Among the unappreciative criticisms of Keats none has been more frequently quoted than the

flippant remark that he had versified Lemprière's Dictionary of Classic Mythology. It is true that in "Endymion" almost all the greater gods of the Greek Pantheon appear, but they are quite freed from their dictionary moorings. They appear and act like independent beings whose history is still being enacted. Their doings in the ancient myths belong to their past history; when Endymion meets with them in his wanderings, they are transfigured by the imagination of the poet, to a degree which brings them into close relationship with the almost wholly imaginary Endymion. The impression thus given is of a mythology, still blossoming into flowers of rare shapes and hues. In the midst of this luxuriant growth the Endymion myth is like a night-blooming Cereus, which unfurls its perfume laden blossoms after long sleep to midsummer moonlight.

Among the myths told in the "Epic of Hades" by Lewis Morris, there is a simple and beautiful version of the Endymion myth. The poet first describes Endymion as he saw him in Hades; after which the boy relates his own story:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ A youthful shade I saw, a comely boy,
With lip and cheek just touched with manly down,
And strong limbs wearing Spring; in mien and garb
A youthful chieftain, with a perfect face
Of fresh young beauty, clustered curls divine,
And chiselled features like a sculptured god,
But warm, and breathing life; only the eyes,
The fair large eyes, were full of dreaming thought,
And seemed to gaze beyond the world of sight,
On a hid world of beauty. Him I stayed,
Accosting with soft words of courtesy;
And on a bank of scentless flowers reclined,
He answered thus:

‘ Nor for the garish sun
I long, nor for the splendors of high noon
In this dim land I languish; for of yore
Full often, when the swift chase swept along
Through the brisk morn, or when my comrades called
To wrestling, or the foot-race, or to cleave
The sunny stream, I loved to walk apart,
Self-centered, sole; and when the laughing girls
To some fair stripling’s oaten melody
Made ready for the dance, I heeded not;
Nor when to the loud trumpet’s blast and blare
My peers rode forth to battle. For, one eve,
In Latmos, after a long day in June,
I stayed to rest me on a sylvan hill,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Where often youth and maid were wont to meet
Towards moonrise; and deep slumber fell on me
Musing on Love, just as the ruddy orb
Rose on the lucid night, set in a frame
Of blooming myrtle and sharp tremulous plane;
Deep slumber fell, and loosed my limbs in rest.
Then, as the full orb poised upon the peak
There came a lovely vision of a maid,
Who seemed to step as from a golden car
Out of the low-hung moon. No mortal form
Such as oft-times of yore I knew and clasped
At twilight 'mid the vines at the mad feast
Of Dionysus, or the fair maids cold
Who streamed in white procession to the shrine
Of the chaste Virgin Goddess; but a shape
Richer and yet more pure, no thinnest veil
Obscured her; but each exquisite limb revealed
Gleamed like a golden statue subtly wrought
By a great sculptor on the architrave
Of some high temple front—only in her
The form was soft and warm and charged with life,
And breathing. As I seemed to gaze on her,
Nearer she drew and gazed: and as I lay
Supine as in a spell, the radiance stooped
And kissed me on the lips, a chaste, sweet kiss,
Which drew my spirit with it. So I slept
Each night upon the hill, until the dawn

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Came in her silver chariot from the East,
And chased my Love away. But ever thus
Dissolved in love as in a heaven-sent dream,
Whenever the bright circle of the moon
Climbed from the hills, whether in leafy June
Or harvest-tide, or when they leapt and pressed
Red-thighed the spouting must, I walked apart
From all, and took no thought for mortal maid,
Nor nimble joys of youth: but night by night
I stole, when all were sleeping, to the hill,
And slumbered and was blest; until I grew
Possest by love so deep, I seemed to live
In slumber only, while the waking day
Showed faint as any vision. So I turned
Paler and paler with the months, and climbed
The steep with labored steps and difficult breath,
But still I climbed, Ay, though the wintry frost,
Chained fast the streams and whitened all the fields
I sought my mistress through the leafless groves,
And slumbered, and was happy till the dawn.
Returning found me stretched out, cold and stark
With life's fire nigh burnt out. Till one fair night
When the birds shivered in the pines, and all
The inner heavens stood open, lo! she came,
Brighter and kinder still, and kissed my eyes
And half-closed lips, and drew my soul through
them,



149

ENDYMION.

ENDYMION.

And in one precious ecstasy dissolved
 My life. And thenceforth, ever on the hill
 I lie unseen of man; a cold white form,
 Still young, through all the ages; but my soul,
 Clothed in this thin presentment of old days,
 Walks this dim land, where moonrise comes,
 Nor day-break, but a twilight waiting-time,
 No more; and, ah! how weary! Yet I judge
 My lot a higher far than his who spends
 His youth on swift hot pleasure, quickly passed;
 Or theirs, my equals, who through long calm years
 Grew sleek in dull content of wedded lives.
 And fair grown offspring. Many a day for them,
 While I was wandering here, and my bones bleached
 Upon the rocks, the sweet autumnal sun
 Beamed, and the grapes grew purple. Many a day
 They heaped up gold, they knelt at festivals
 They waxed in high report and fame of men,
 They gave their girls in marriage; while for me
 Upon the untrodden peaks, the cold grey morn,
 The snows, the rains, the winds, the untempered
 blaze,
 Beat year by year, until I turned to stone,
 And the great eagles shrieked at me, and wheeled
 Affrighted. Yet I judge it better indeed
 To seek in life, as now I know I sought
 Some fair impossible Love, which slays our life,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Some fair ideal raised too high for man;
And failing to grow mad, and cease to be,
Than to decline, as they do who have found
Broad paunched content and weal and happiness;
And so an end. For one day, as I know,
The high aim unfulfilled fulfils itself:
The deep unsatisfied thirst is satisfied;
And this twilight broken suddenly,
The inmost heaven, the lucent stars of God,
The Moon of Love, the Sun of Life; and I,
I who pine here—I on the Latmian hill
Shall soar aloft and find them.' ”

Like the Endymion of Keats this Endymion is a poet, or at least a being of artistic temperament, though one of an entirely different stamp. His life is altogether in his dreams, for he has no waking visions. He is also absolutely steadfast to one ideal from the first. He knows himself wholly and never wavers. The fair ideal beyond his reach is always the moon-goddess. She does not awaken his admiration first as a sentient Moon, as the goddess, Diana, as an unknown Love of divine origin, as a human maiden—all at last realized to be one and the same, for this Endymion is a poet of much

less warmth of emotion and splendor of imagination. All things human he repudiates so utterly that the image of him at the last, turning to stone is a fitting symbol of the atrophy of his human affections. Keats had the much broader conception that the highest ideal was only finally to be reached through the recognition not by the repudiation of the human affections.

The charm of Lewis's treatment of the myth, however, lies in its purity, and in the pervading atmosphere of moonlight, which at its brightest, still keeps a cool, mysterious calm, carrying upwards the emotions into rarefied regions of the spirit.

Robert Buchanan has treated the myth from Selene's standpoint. It is merely a plaint on the part of the goddess, because her lover is doomed to eternal sleep. Nothing is added to the content of the myth; as in the Greek story, there is no hope in all the ages to come of a waking reunion between the lovers. The charm of the subject always seems to enter into the verse and produce a lovely poem, no matter whether the poet sees much or little of its possibilities:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

I

“ I hide myself in the cloud that flies
From the west and drops on the hill's gray shoulder.
And I gleam through the cloud with my panther eyes,
While the stars turn paler, the dews grow colder:
I veil my naked glory in mist,
Quivering downward and dewily glistening,
Till his sleep is as pale as my lips unkist,
And I tremble above him, panting and listening.
As white as a star, as cold as a stone,
Dim as my light in a sleeping lake,
With his head on his arm he lieth alone
And I sigh, ‘ Awake!
Wake, Endymion, wake and see! ’
And he stirs in his sleep for the love of me;
But on his eyelids my breath I shake:
‘ Endymion, Endymion!
Awaken, awaken! ’
And the yellow grass stirs with the mystic moan,
And the tall pines groan,
And echo sighs in her grot forsaken
The name of Endymion!

2

“ A foamy dew from the Ocean old,
Whence I rise with shadows behind me flying,
Drops from my sandals and glittereth cold
On the long spear-grass where my love is lying.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

My face is dim with departed suns,
And my eyes are dark from the depths of ocean,
A starry shudder throughout me runs,
And my pale cloud stirs with a radiant motion,
When the darkness wherein he slumbers alone
Ebbs back from my brightness, as black waves
break

From my shining ankle with shuddering tone:

And I sigh, 'Awake!

Wake, Endymion, wake and hear.'

And he stirs in his sleep with a tear

And his thin lips part for my sweet sake:

'Endymion, Endymion!

Awaken, awaken!'

And the skies are moved, and a shadow is blown

From the thunderer's throne,

And the spell of a voice from Olympus shaken

Echoes 'Endymion.'

3

Then under his lids like a balmy rain

I put pale dreams of my heavenly glory:--

And he sees me lead with a silver chain

The tamed Sea-Tempest white toothed and hoary;

And he sees me fading thro' forests dark

When the leopard and lion avoid me in wonder.

Or ploughing the sky in a pearly bark,

While the earth is dumb with my beauty under!

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Then he brightens and yearns where he lies alone,
And his heart grows dumb with a yearning ache,
And the thin lips part with a wondering moan,
As I sigh 'Awake!'

Wake, Endymion, wake and see
All things grow bright for the love of me,
With a love that grows gentle for thy sweet sake!
'Endymion, Endymion,
Awaken, Awaken!'

And my glory grows paler, the deep woods groan
And the waves intone,
Ay, all things whenever my glory is shaken
Murmur, 'Endymion!'
Ah! The black earth brightens, the Sea creeps
near

When I swim from the sunset's shadowy portal;
But he will not see, and he will not hear,
Though to hear and see were to be immortal:
Pale as a star and cold as a stone,
Dim as my ghost in a sleeping lake.
In an icy vision he lieth alone,
And I sigh, 'Awake!'

Wake, Endymion, wake and be
Divine, divine, for the love of me!
And my odorous breath on his lids I shake:
'Endymion, Endymion!
Awaken, awaken!'

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

But Zeus sitteth cold on his cloud-shrouded throne
And heareth my moan,
And his stern lips form not the hope-forsaken
Name of Endymion."

Arthur Hugh Clough in his poem, "Selene," gives a myth of Selene in love with the Earth, which calls to mind the love between the Moon and Earth in Shelley's "Prometheus," except that it lacks the ecstasy of Shelley's Moon and Earth lyrics, and reflects in the hopelessness of the love the Greek conception of the Endymion myth as well as the inevitableness of nature's laws.

" My beloved, is it nothing
Though we meet not, neither can,
That I see thee, and thou me,
That we see, and see we see,
When I see I also feel thee;
Is it nothing, my beloved?

" Thy luminous clear beauty
Brightens on me in my night,
I withdraw into my darkness
To allure thee into light.
About me and upon me I feel them pass and stay,
About me, deep into me, every lucid tender ray.

“ And thou, thou also feelest
 When thou stealest
 Shamefaced and half afraid
 To the chamber of thy shade,
 Thou in thy turn,
 Thou, too, feelest
 Something follow, something yearn,
 A full orb blaze and burn.

“ My full orb upon thine,
 As thine erst, gently smiling,
 Softly wooing, sweetly wiling
 Gleamed on mine;
 So mine on thine in turn
 When thou feelest blaze and burn,
 Is it nothing, my beloved?

“ Closer, closer come unto me.
 Shall I see thee and no more?
 I can see thee, is that all?
 Let me also,
 Let me feel thee,
 Closer, closer, my beloved.
 Come unto me, come to me, come!
 O cruel, cruel lot, still thou rollest, stayest not,
 Lookest onward, lookst before,
 Yet I follow, evermore.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Oh, cold and cruel fate, thou rollest on thy way,
Scarcely lookest, wilt thou stray,
From thine alien way?

“ The inevitable motion
Bears me forth upon the line
Whose course I cannot see.
I must move as it conveys me
Evermore. It so must be.

“ O cold one, and I round thee
Revolve, round only thee,
Straining ever to be nearer
While thou evadest still;
Repellest still, O cold one,
Nay, but closer, closer, closer,
My beloved, come, come, come!

“ The inevitable motion
Carries both upon the line,
Also you as well as me.
What is best and what is strongest,
We obey. It so must be.

“ Cruel, cruel, didst thou only
Feel as I feel evermore,
A force, though in, not of me,
Drawing inward, in, in, in,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Yea, thou shalt though, ere all endeth
Thou shalt feel me closer, closer,
My beloved, close, close to thee
Come to thee, come, come, come!

“The inevitable Motion
Bears us both upon its line
Together, you as me,
Together and asunder,
Evermore. It so must be.”

T. B. Read and Longfellow have both written simple verses on the subject. Read's is a word painting portraying the beautiful youth as he lay on a bed of flowers, no attempt being made to interpret or put larger thought into the myth:

“What time the stars first flocked into the blue
Behind young Hesper, shepherd of the eve.
Sleep bathed the fair boy's lids with charmed dew,
'Mid flowers that all day blossomed to receive
Endymion.

“Lo! where he lay encircled in his dream;
The moss was glad to pillow his soft hair,
And toward him leaned the lily from the stream,
The hanging vine waved wooing in the air
Endymion.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ The brook that erewhile won its easy way,
O’errun with meadow grasses long and cool,
Now reeled into a fuller tide and lay
Caressing in its clear enamored pool
Endymion.

“ And all the sweet, delicious airs that fan
Enchanted gardens in their hour of bloom,
Blown through the soft invisible pipe of Pan,
Breathed ’mid their mingled music and perfume,
Endymion.

“ The silvery leaves that rustled in the light,
Sent their winged shadows o’er his cheek entranced;
The constellations wandered down the night,
And whispered to the dew-drops where they danced
Endymion.

“ Lo! there he slept, and all his flock at will
Went star-like down the meadow’s azure mists:—
What wonder that pale Dian with a thrill
Breathed on his lips her sudden love, and kissed
Endymion.”

Longfellow, after his wont, makes a pointed ethical application of the story, in which Dian’s kiss is regarded as a symbol of love in the abstract:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ The rising moon has hid her stars ;
Her level rays, like golden bars,
Lie on the landscape green,
With shadows brown between.

“ And silver white the river gleams,
As if Diana, in her dreams,
Had dropt her silver bow
Upon the meadows low.

“ On such a tranquil night as this,
She woke Endymion with a kiss,
When, sleeping in the grove,
He dreamed not of her love.

“ Like Dian’s kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought ;
Nor voice, nor sound betrays
Its deep, impassioned gaze.

“ It comes,—the beautiful, the free,
The crown of all humanity,—
In silence and alone
To seek the elected one.

“ It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep,
Are Life’s oblivion, the soul’s sleep,
And kisses the closed eyes
Of him who slumbering lies.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ O, weary hearts! O, slumbering eyes!
O, drooping souls, whose destinies
Are fraught with fear and pain,
Ye shall be loved again!

“ No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own.

“ Responds,—as if with unseen wings
An angel touched its quivering strings;
And whispers, in its song,
‘ Where hast thou stayed so long! ’ ”

THE MOON AND THE SUN FROM
THE HOMERIC HYMNS TO KEATS

IV

The Moon and the Sun from the Homeric Hymns to Keats

THE TITAN SUN OF KEATS

THE Titan Sun is a godlike being about whom there is little information in Greek mythology. Like Selene, he is the earlier conception of the Sun god, belonging to that phase of thought when the Sun itself was regarded as a personal being. An enormous mass of Sun myths exists to be found in every corner of the earth, either depicting the adventures of a primitive Sun-being or singing his praises in hymns. This Sun-god frequently showed a weakness far from omnipotence, for the primitive mind observed that the Sun really lived a very treadmill sort of existence, being confined to a regular path through the skies, which though not always exactly the same varies with monotonous regularity. The story is told of

an Inca prince, who, speculating upon the subject, was sore puzzled at the Sun worship of his ancestors. If the Sun is all-powerful, the Inca inquired, why is he plainly subject to laws? Why does he go his daily rounds instead of wandering at large up and down the fields of heaven? This prince of savages came to the conclusion that there must be a will superior to that of the Sun, so he raised a temple to the unknown God. Thus, this man wise above others made a step in the direction of religious development. Lower types of savage minds did not arrive at such brilliant philosophical conclusions; instead, they invented myths to account for the prescribed course of the Sun in the heavens, so there came to be tales to the effect that the Sun had once been an obstreperous being, and it became necessary to snare him and beat him, or conquer him by magic. American Indians and Polynesians both have stories of this description.

One of the most remarkable of the Sun stories is a primitive American legend in which a big old man, of a bloodthirsty disposition, is finally conquered by his son-in-law, Tulchuherris, who splits



HYPERION.

From a painting by George Frederick Watts.

him in two, one half becoming the Sun, the other the Moon. It came about in this wise, old Sas had designs on Tulchuherris's life as he had on every one's. He had made several attempts to kill Tulchuherris by swinging him on a pine tree, but Tulchuherris was helped by a wise little sprite, Winishuyat, his grandmother had given him, which was hidden in the top of his hair; and finally turned old Sas's weapon against himself:

* "He rose in the night, turned toward Sas, and said: 'Whu! whu! I want you, Sas, to sleep soundly.'

"Then he reached his right hand toward the west, toward his grandmother's, and a stick came on it. He carved and painted the stick beautifully, red and black, and made a fire-drill. Then he reached his left hand toward the east, and wood for a mokos (arrow-straightener) came on it. He made the mokos and asked the fox dog for a fox-skin. The fox gave it. Of this he made a headband and painted it red. All these things he put in his quiver.

" 'We are ready,' said Tulchuherris. 'Now, Daylight, I wish you to come right away, to come quickly.' Daylight came. Sas rose, and they started soon after for the tree.

* See Creation Myths of Primitive America by Jeremiah Curtin.

“ ‘My son-in-law, I will go first,’ said Sas; and he climbed the tree.

“ ‘Go higher!’ said Tulchuherris. ‘I will not give a great pull, go up higher.’

“He went high, and Tulchuherris did not give a hard pull. Sas came down safely.

“Tulchuherris now went high, almost to the top. Sas looked at him, saw that he was near the top, and then drew the great pine almost to the earth, standing with his back to the top of the tree. Tulchuherris sprang off behind Sas and ran away into the field. The tree sprang into the sky with a roar.

“ ‘You are killed now, my son-in-law,’ said Sas. ‘You will not trouble me hereafter!’ He talked on to himself, and was glad.

“ ‘What are you saying, father-in-law?’ asked Tulchuherris, coming up from behind.

“Sas turned. ‘Oh, my son-in-law, I was afraid that I had hurt you. I was sorry.’

“ ‘Now, my brother,’ said Winishuyat, ‘Sas will kill you unless you kill him. At midday he will kill you surely, unless you kill him. Are we not as strong as Sas?’

“ ‘Father-in-law, try again; then I will go to the very top and beat you,’ said Tulchuherris.

“That morning Sas’s elder daughter said to her sister after Sas had gone,—

“ ‘My sister, our father Sas has tried all people, and has conquered all of them so far; but to-day he will not conquer, to-day he will die. I know this; do not look for him to-day, he will not come back; he will never come back to us.’

“Sas went up high. ‘I will kill him now,’ thought Tulchuherris, and he was sorry; still he cried: ‘Go a little higher; I went higher, I will go to the top next time. I will not hurt you, go a little higher.’

“Sas went higher and higher, till at last he said, ‘I cannot climb any more, I am at the top; don’t give a big pull, my son-in-law.’

“Tulchuherris took hold of the tree with one hand, pulled it as far as it would bend, pulled it till it touched the earth, and then let it fly. When the tree rushed toward the sky, it made an awful noise, and soon after a crash was heard, a hundred times louder than any thunder. All living things heard it. The whole sky and earth shook. Ollebis, who lives in the highest place, heard it. All living things said,—

“ ‘Tulchuherris is killing his father-in-law. Tulchuherris has split Sas.’

“The awful noise was the splitting of Sas.

“Tulchuherris stood waiting, waited three hours, perhaps, after the earth stopped trembling: then, far up in the sky he heard a voice, saying,—

“ ‘Oh, my son-in-law, I am split, I am dead. I

thought that I was the strongest power living; but I am not. From this time on I shall say Tulchuherris is the greatest power in the world.'

"Tulchuherris could not see any one. He only heard a voice far up in the sky, saying,—

"'My son-in-law, I will ask you for a few things. Will you give me your fox-skin headband?'

"Tulchuherris put his hand into his fox-skin quiver, took out the band, and tossed it to him. It went straight up to Sas, and he caught it. 'Now will you give me your mokos?' Tulchuherris took out the mokos and threw it. 'Give me your fire-drill!' He threw that.

"Another voice was heard now, not so loud: 'I wish you would give me a headband of white quartz.' This voice was the smaller part of Sas.

"When Tulchuherris had given the headband, he said,—

"'My father-in-law, you are split—you are two. The larger part of you will be Sas [the Sun], the smaller part Chanahl [the Moon, the white one]; and this division is what you have needed for a long time, but no one had the strength to divide you. You are in a good state now. You, Chanahl, will grow old quickly and die; then you will come to life and be young again. You will be always like that in this world. And, Sas, you will travel west all the time, travel every

day without missing a day; you will travel day after day without resting. You will see all things in the world as they live and die. My father-in-law, take this, too, from me.'

"Tulchuherris threw up to Sas a quiver made of porcupine skin.

" 'I will take it,' said Sas, 'and I will carry it always.'

"Then Tulchuherris gave Chanahl the quartz headband and said,—'Wear it around your head always so that when you travel in the night you will be seen by all people.'

"Sas put the fox-skin around his head, and fastened the mokos crosswise in front of his forehead. The fire-drill he fastened in his hair behind, placing it upright. At sunrise we see the hair of the fox-skin around Sas's head before we see Sas himself.

"Next Tulchuherris threw up two red berries, saying,—

" 'Take these and make red cheeks on each side of your face, so that when you rise in the morning you will be bright, and make everything bright.'

"Tulchuherris went west and got some white roots from the mountains, threw them to Sas, and said, 'Put these across your forehead.'

"Next he stretched his right hand westward, and two large shells, blue inside, came to his palm. He threw these to Sas and said,—

“ ‘Put these on your forehead for a sign when you come up in the morning. There is a place in the east which is all fire. When you reach that place, go in and warm yourself. Go to Olelpanti now. Olelbis, your father, lives there. He will tell you where to go.’

“ ‘Sas went to Olelpanti, where he found a wonderful and very big sweat-house. It was toward morning, and Olelbis was lying down, covered with a blanket. While sleeping he heard a noise, and when he woke he saw some one near him. He knew who it was. Sas turned to him and said,—

“ ‘My father, I am split. I thought myself the strongest person in the world, but I was not. Tulchuherris is the strongest.’

“ ‘Well, my son Sas,’ asked Olelbis, ‘where do you wish to be, and how do you wish to live?’

“ ‘I have come to ask you,’ replied Sas.

“ ‘Well,’ answered Olelbis, ‘you must travel all the time, and it is better that you go from east to west. If you go north and travel southward, I don’t think that will be well. If you go west and travel eastward, I don’t think that will be well, either. If you go south and travel northward, I don’t think that will be right.

“ ‘I think that best which Tulchuherris told you. He told you to go east and travel to the west. He said that there is a hot place in the east, that you must

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

go into that place and get hot before you start every morning. I will show you the road from east to west. In a place right south of this is a very big tree, a tobacco tree, just half-way between east and west. When you come from the east, sit down in the shade of the tree, rest a few minutes, and go on. Never forget your porcupine quiver or other ornaments when you travel. . . .

“ ‘Go to the east, go into the hot place every morning. There is always a fire in it. Take a white oak staff, thrust the end of that staff into the fire till it is one glowing coal. When you travel westward carry this burning staff in your hand. In summer take a manzanita staff; put it in the fire and burn the end. This staff will be red hot all the day.

“ ‘Now you may go east and begin. You will travel all the time, day after day, without stopping. All living things will see you with your glowing staff. You will see everything in the world, but you will be always alone. No one can ever keep you company or travel with you. I am your father and you are my son but I could not let you stay with me.’ ”

The jump at a scientific fact, like the separation of the Moon from the Sun is one of those strange guesses which are often to be found in the most primitive myths. The other aspects of the myth

are, however, puerile in fancy and illogical in thought.

The conception of a personal Sun and Moon in Hindoo or Greek myth is at once more poetic and more reverent. The Vedic hymns to Surya, for example have much power and beauty:

" Sing praises unto Sûrya, to the son of Dyaus.
 May this my truthful speech guard me on every side,
 wherever heaven and earth and days are spread
 abroad.
 All else that is in motion finds a place of rest: the
 waters ever flow and ever mounts the Sun.
 No godless man from time remotest draws thee down
 when thou art driving forth with wingèd, dap-
 pled steeds.
 He turns him to an alien region of the east, and,
 Sûrya, thou arisest with a different light.
 O Sûrya, with the light whereby thou scatterest
 gloom, and with thy ray impellest every moving
 thing,
 Keep far from us all feeble, worthless sacrifice, and
 drive away disease and every evil dream.
 Sent forth thou guardest well the path of every man,
 and in thy wonted way arisest free from wrath.
 When, Sûrya, we address our prayers to thee to-day,
 may the gods favor this our purpose and desire.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

This invocation, these our words may Heaven and
Earth, and Indra and the Waters and the
Maruts hear.

Ne'er may we suffer want in presence of the Sun, and,
living happy lives, may we attain old age.

Cheerful in spirit, evermore, and keen of sight, with
store of children, free from sickness and from
sin,

Long-living, may we look, O Sûrya, upon thee upris-
ing day by day, thou who art rich in friends!

Sûrya, may we live long and look upon thee still, thee,
O far-seeing one, bringing the glorious light,

The radiant god, the spring of joy to every eye, as
thou art mounting up o'er the high shining flood.

Thou by whose lustre all the world of life comes forth,
and by thy beams again returns unto its rest,

O Sûrya with the golden hair, ascend for us day after
day, still bringing purer innocence.

Bless us with shine, bless us with perfect daylight,
bless us with cold, with fervent heat and
lustre.

Bestow on us, O Sûrya, varied riches, to bless us in our
home and when we travel."

When we come to the Greek personal Sun, we
find some confusion as already noted in regard to
his name. In Homer, he is called Helios, and the

epithet attached to Helios is Hyperion, he who walks on high, or the wanderer on high. The most interesting episode told of Helios Hyperion in Homer, is the account in the "Odyssey" of the visit of Odysseus to the isle of Trinacria, where the oxen and sheep of Helios Hyperion are kept. Though warned not to do so, the men of Odysseus made a great feast upon the Sun's best oxen, and are all shipwrecked in consequence through the might of Jove to whom the Sun complained:

"O Father Jove, and all ye blessed gods
 Who never die, avenge the wrong I bear
 Upon the comrades of Laertes' son,
 Ulysses, who have foully slain my beeves,
 In which I took delight whene'er I rose
 Into the starry heaven, and when again
 I sank from heaven to earth. If for the wrong
 They make not large amends, I shall go down
 To Hades, there to shine among the dead.'

"The cloud-compelling Jupiter replied:—
 'Still shine, O Sun! among the deathless gods
 And mortal men, upon the nourishing earth.
 Soon will I cleave, with a white thunderbolt,
 Their galley in the midst of the black sea.' "

In Hesiod we read of the Titan Sun, Hyperion. From the union of Uranos the personified Heaven and Gaia, the Earth sprang the Titans, of which Hesiod enumerates thirteen. Of these the more important are Okeanos and Tethys, Hyperion and Thea, Kronos and Rhea, Iäpetus, Themis and Mnemosyne. Then Hesiod makes Hyperion the father of Helios.

The most complete description of this personal Sun god, as in the case of the moon-goddess, Selene, is in the Homeric "Hymn to the Sun," of which I give first a literal version, and then a more poetic version by Shelley. This follows the Hesiodic account, but practically speaking, it is as much a hymn to Hyperion as to Helios.

"O Calliope, child of Jove, again begin to hymn the shining Sun, whom large eyed Euryphaëssa bore to the son of the earth and the starry heaven. For Hyperion wedded his own sister, Euryphaëssa, all-renowned, who bore him beauteous children, both rosy-fingered Morn, and the fair-haired Moon, and the unwearied Sun, like unto the immortals, who shines unto mortals and to the immortal gods, mounting his steeds. And dreadfully with his eyes he glances from his golden casque,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

and from him the bright rays flash splendidly and down from his temples the cheek-plates of his helmet shining from his head, guard his beauteous face, shining afar, and with the gale of the winds his beauteous garments glitter around his form, and his male steeds beneath. Here, indeed, at even, he, having stopped his golden yoked steeds, sends them through heaven toward the ocean. Hail, O King, and willingly grant a pleasant life; and commencing from thee, I will celebrate the race of articulate-voiced men, demigods, whose deeds the gods have shown forth unto mortals."

Shelley's version runs:

"Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more
To the bright Sun thy hymn of music pour,
Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth
Euryphaëssa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;
Euryphaëssa, the famed sister fair
Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear
A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,
Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,
The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,
Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run
Unconquerably, illuming the abodes
Of mortal men and the eternal Gods.

"Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes
Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And are shot forth afar clear beams of light;
His countenance with radiant glory bright
Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,
And the light vest with which his limbs are bound,
Of woof ethereal delicately twined,
Glow in the stream of the uplifting wind.
His rapid steeds soon bear him to the west,
Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,
And the fleet car with yoke of gold which he
Sends from bright heaven beneath the shadowy sea."

So little mythical lore attaches to Hyperion that he naturally did not become a very important figure in literature. Allusions to him occur especially in Shakespeare, who refers to him more than once, and possibly the dramatist's fondness for the name may have impressed it upon the mind of Keats who was forever browsing in the Shakespearian garden. To Keats it made little difference whether a mythical personage had any story or not. His imagination was equal to the task of furnishing forth any Greek god or goddess with a myth in keeping with his state. So he takes Hyperion, the Titan Sun, not to write about his triumph of galloping over the field of heaven day

by day, but to tell of his overthrow along with other Titans when Zeus usurped the throne of his father Saturn, and of the accession of the new god of the Sun, Apollo.

The poem opens with a picture of the forlorn, old Saturn sleeping his life away after he has been dethroned:

“ Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

“ Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless dead,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Unscptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet."

To him comes Thea, the spouse of Hyperion,
full of grief at his fallen state.

"It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages looked to Egypt for their love.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face;
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder laboring up.
One hand she pressed upon that aching spot

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal she felt cruel pain :
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone :
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
'Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old
King?

I have no comfort for thee, no not one :
I cannot say, " O wherefore sleepest thou ? "
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy scepter pass'd ; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time ! O moments big as years !
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I

Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
 Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep.'

"As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
 Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
 So came these words and went; the while in tears
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,
 And still these two were postured motionless,
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:

' O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
 Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
 Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
 Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
 To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
 How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
 While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
 But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
 And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale,
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
 And all those acts which Deity supreme
 Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
 Away from my own bosom: I have left
 My strong identity, my real self,
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;
 Space region'd with life-air, and barren void;
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.
 Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou seest

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets
 blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! Where is Saturn?’

“This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea’s sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch’d
Utterance thus:—‘But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?’—That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

“ ‘This cheers our fallen house: come to our
friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I hither.’
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow’d, and she turned to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.”

The poet turns from this pathetic picture of the dethroned Saturn to the scene of the imprisonment of the Titans who had taken part against Zeus as described in Hesiod’s “Theogony.”

“Long time then they fought, incurring soul-vexing toil, the Titan gods and as many as were born from Kronos (Saturn); in opposition to each other in stout conflicts; the one side, the glorious Titans from lofty Othrys, and the other, I wot, the gods, givers of good things, whom Rhea the fair-haired, had borne to Kronos in union with him, from Olympus. They, then, I ween, in soul-distressing battle, one *party* with

the other, were fighting continuously more than ten years."

On the one side the friends of Zeus were

"pitted against the Titans in deadly combat, holding huge rocks in their sturdy hands. But the Titans on the other side made strong their squadrons with alacrity, and both parties were showing work of hand and force at the same time; and the boundless sea re-echoed terribly, and earth resounded loudly, and broad heaven groaned, being shaken, and vast Olympus was convulsed from its base under the violence of the immortals, and a severe quaking came to murky Tartaros, namely, a hollow sound of countless chase of feet, and of strong battle-strokes: to such an extent, I ween, did they hurl groan-causing weapons. And the voice of both parties reached to starry heaven, as they cheered: for they came together with a great war-cry.

"No longer, in truth, did Jove restrain his fury, but then forthwith his heart was filled with fierceness, and he begun also to exhibit all his force: then, I wot, from heaven and from Olympus together he sent forth lightning continually and the bolts close together with thunder and lightning flew duly from his sturdy hand, whirling a sacred flash, in frequent succession, while all around, life-giving Earth was crashing in conflagration, and the immense forests on all sides crackled

loudly with fire. All land was boiling, and Ocean's streams, and the barren sea: warm vapor was circling the earth-born Titans, and the incessant blaze reached the divine dense atmosphere, whilst flashing radiance of thunderbolt and lightning was bereaving their eyes of sight, strong heroes though they were. Fearful heat likewise possessed Chaos: and it seemed, to look at, face to face, with the eye, and to hear the sound with the ear, just as if earth and broad heaven from above were threatening to meet (for such an exceeding crash would have arisen from earth falling in ruins, and heaven dashing it down from above). Such a din there rose when the gods clashed in strife. The winds too at the same time were stirring up quaking and dust together, thunder and lightning and smoking bolt, shafts of the mighty Jove; and they were bearing shout and battle-cry into the midst, one of another, then a terrible noise of dreadful strife was roused, strength of prowess was put forth, and the battle was inclined: but before *that time* assailing one another, they were fighting incessantly in stern conflict. Now the others, I wot, among the first ranks roused the keen fight. Cottus, Briareus, and Gyes insatiable in war, who truly were hurling from sturdy hands three hundred rocks close upon each other, and they had overshadowed the Titans with missiles, sent them 'neath the broad-wayed earth, and bound them in irksome bonds (having conquered them

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

with their hands, over-haughty though they were) as far beneath under earth as heaven is from the earth, for equal is the space from earth to murky Tartaros. For nine nights and days also would a brazen anvil *be* descending from the earth, *to* reach on the tenth to Tartaros. Around it moreover a brazen fence has been forged: and about it Night is poured in three rows around the neck; but above spring the roots of Earth and barren Sea. There, under murky darkness, the Titan gods lie hidden by the counsels of cloud-compelling Jupiter in a dark, drear place, *where are* the extremities of vast Earth. These may not go forth, for Neptune has placed above them brazen gates, and a wall goes round them on both sides."

Keats describes the anguish of the imprisoned Titans, but one of whom, Hyperion still rules as God of the Sun. He, too, shall soon feel the universal doom; though not without making a fierce struggle to save the old order:

"Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the Sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he.
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angrily: while sometimes eagles' wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savor of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbored in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,
For rest divine upon exalted couch

And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,
 Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
 Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
 That inlet to severe magnificence
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

“ He enter’d; but he enter’d full of wrath;
 His flaming robes stream’d out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
 That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: 'O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—

Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 I will advance a terrible right arm
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again.'
 He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat, but came not forth;
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out 'Hush!'
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
 At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
 From over-strained might. Released, he fled
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,
 He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
 Clear'd them of heavy vapors, burst them wide
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens through,
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,

But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
 Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with laboring thought
 Won from the gaze of many centuries:
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
 Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings, this orb
 Possessed for glory, two fair argent wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach:
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
 Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
 While still the dazzling globe maintained eclipse,
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.
 He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 't is told.
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesne of night;
 And the bright Titan, phrensied with new woes,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint."

As Thea heartens Saturn, now Cælus, or Heaven, the father of Hyperion, speaks encouraging words to him:

" There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cælus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear:
' O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating; at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cælus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space:
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
 Pale wox I, and in vapors hid my face.
 Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 Divine ye were created, and divine
 In sad demeanor, solemn, undisturb'd,
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
 Actions of rage and passion; even as
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
 In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
 Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
 As thou canst move about, an evident God;
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
 My life is but the life of winds and tides,
 No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
 But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
 Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!
 For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 'And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.'—

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night."

The description of Tartaros which opens the second book of the poem is an elaboration upon the account in Hesiod:

"There dwell Gyes, and Cottus, and high-spirited Briareus, faithful guards of ægis-bearing Jove. And there are the sources and boundaries of dusky Earth, of murky Tartaros, of barren Sea, and starry Heaven, all in their order: boundaries oppressive and gloomy, which also even gods abhor, a vast chasm, not even for a whole round of a year would one reach the pavement, after having first been within the gates: but hurricane to hurricane would bear him onward hither and thither, distressing *him*, and dreadful even to immortal gods is the prodigy, and there the dread abodes of gloomy Night stand shrouded in dark clouds. In front of these the son of Iäpetus [Atlas] stands and

holds broad Heaven, with his head and unwearied hands, unmovedly, where Night and Day also drawing nigh are wont to salute each other, as they cross the vast brazen threshold. The one is about to go down within, whilst the other comes forth abroad, nor ever doth the abode constrain both within; but constantly one at any rate being outside the dwelling, wanders over the earth, while the other again being within the abode, awaits the season of her journey, until it come; the one having a far-seeing light for men on the earth, and the other, destructive Night, *having* Sleep, the brother of Death, in its hands, being shrouded in hazy mist."

The poet, if he were actually indebted to this for his knowledge of Tartaros derives from it hardly more than the general atmosphere of gloom; he is even a little confused as to the true standing of Gyes, and Cottus, and Briareus in the fight, for he includes them among the suffering Titans. According to Hesiod they were the guards over the Titans placed in Tartaros by Jove whom they had helped in the struggle. The terror of the place is greatly enhanced by the particularity of detail added by the poet, and not only does he make us see all its possibilities of horror, but he draws life-

like portraits of the dismal company of fallen gods
of whom little more than the names and attributes
exist in Greek myths :

“ Just at the self-same beat of Time’s wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain’d with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn’d.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem’d
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn’d with iron. All were not assembled:
Some chain’d in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon’d in opaque element to keep

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbor gave
Or word or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus, another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain: for still upon the flint

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scared the Younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbor'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chant
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff.
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain: for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

“ As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye.
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
'Titans, behold your God!' at which some groan'd;
Some started on their feet; some also shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd—all bow'd with reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes."

Saturn now addresses the Titans, questioning why they should thus have fallen so low, and asking Oceanus for help. In the answer of Oceanus lies the philosophy of the poem in a nutshell. Not because of sin have the Titans been conquered, but because of the evolution of the world spirit toward perfection. All has come about through law:

"There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,

With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
 No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
 Thus grew it up:—' Not in my own sad breast,
 Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
 Not in the legends of the first of days,
 Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
 Which starry Uranus with finger bright
 Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
 Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—
 And the which book ye know I ever kept
 For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!
 Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
 Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
 At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
 One against one, or two, or three, or all
 Each several one against the other three,
 As fire with air loud warring when rainfloods
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,
 Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!
O Titans, shall I say "Arise!"—Ye groan:
Shall I say "Crouch!"—Ye groan. What can I
then?

O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
How we can war, how engine our great wrath!
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonished, that severe content .
Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!'

"So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first-endavoring tongue
Caught infantlike from the far-foamed sands.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

'O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce must be content to stoop;
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be;
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Then thou, first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 't is pain;
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 't is the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might:
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire; farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.' "

A Darwin could not have stated more explicitly the doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest than Oceanus does in this passage. To the acumen of the scientist is, however, added the vision of the poet. He dares to walk where foot of scientist never treads, to bridge the gulf between experience and the ideal; to declare that the final outcome of this toilsome unfolding of the higher from

the lower is to be supreme Beauty. It is not surprising that sentient beings like the fallen Titans should be unwilling to accept a theory of their fall which calls upon them to exercise the utmost unselfishness. For a time, however, they are silent. The silence is broken by Clymene, whom none regarded. She has been so impressed by a glimpse of the new beauty that her grief at her own discomfiture is half-assuaged, and like Oceanus, she shows a willingness to accept the law:

“ With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
 ‘ O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
 And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
 And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
 There to remain for ever, as I fear:
 I would not bode of evil, if I thought
 So weak a creature could turn off the help
 Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;
 Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
 Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
 And know that we had parted from all hope.
 I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
 Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
 Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, "Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!"
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried, "Apollo!"
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard.'

"So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:"

The strong, defiant words of Enceladus, revive
the fainting spirits of the Titans:

"The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
'Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armory were spent,
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves
Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I roused
Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide-glaring for revenge.'— As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus:
'Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies;
How to feed fierce the crooked strings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done;
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;
Those days all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
That was before our brows were taught to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

That was before we knew the winged thing,
Victory might be lost, or might be won,
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here.' ”

Hyperion brings no reassurance with him of final victory. Splendid a vision as he is, his dejection over his own impending doom is too evident:

“ All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendor, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He uttered, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day.
And many hid their faces from the light:
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he tower'd on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered 'Saturn!'

Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of 'Sat-
 urn! ' "

Having aroused our sympathies to the utmost for these giant figures in their woe, especially, for the majestic and beautiful Hyperion, the poet suddenly leaves them, to describe the coming Sun-god, Apollo.

" Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
 Amazed were those Titans utterly.
 O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
 A solitary sorrow best befits
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
 Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
 Many a fallen old Divinity
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
 For lo! 't is for the Father of all verse.
 Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
 Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
 And let the clouds of even and of morn

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.



APOLLO.

Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
 And there was purport in her looks for him,
 Which he with eager guess began to read
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
 ' How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ?
 Or hath that antique mien and robed form
 Moved in these vales invisible till now ?
 Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
 The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
 In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
 The rustle of those ample skirts about
 These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
 Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
 Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,
 And their eternal calm, and all that face,
 Or I have dream'd.'—' Yes,' said the supreme shape,
 ' Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 Of such new tuneful wonder. Is 't not strange
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,
 What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad
 When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born.'—Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables:—' Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendor pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
Mute thou remainest—Mute! yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal.'—Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush

All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd;
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
 Celestial . . .”

Here this fragment of a great poem, which was to have been as long as “Endymion,” ends. Perhaps the poem was born to die in its infancy. The poet must have had very warm sympathies for Hyperion and his Titans or he would not have wished to make the subject matter of his poem “Hyperion,” yet, after bringing his readers fully into sympathy with these grief-stricken gods, he hustles them off the stage at the beginning of the third book, and introduces Apollo, who as the victorious Sun-God, must practically be the hero for the remainder of the poem.

It is quite evident, I think, that beautiful and

profound as this fragment is, its possibilities as an organic work of art are at variance with its philosophy. The mind once aroused to sympathy with Hyperion and the other Titans stubbornly refuses to see ahead any dénouement in which the stately, radiant Hyperion shall not have a part equally as glorious as that of Apollo. We cannot bear the thought that such beauty should die.

On the other hand the power of its philosophy lies in its truth to the phenomena of evolution. If Keats had been a scientific student of mythology he could not have interpreted more accurately the development of Greek myths through various phases of human consciousness. Ignez Goldziher, the scholarly German mythologist, remarks with truth that myths reflect the state of social development to which human society has attained. Greek mythology in its dynastic series of ruling gods shows an evolution from a worship of the forces of nature to a worship of the powers of the mind. The development of the whole universe presented itself to the Greek understanding as the supplanting of a lower power by a higher one, under the will of a supreme fate or necessity which was

above both gods and men. They found illustrations of their convictions in their own history, and as pointed out by Woodberry, in conquering the Persians, their victory was one of light over darkness, of civilization over barbarism and "therefore on the walls of their great temple, the Parthenon, which was the embodiment of their spiritual consciousness as a race, they depicted three great mystic events symbolizing the victory of the higher power,—that is, the war of the Centaurs and Lapithæ, of the Athenians and Amazons, of the Gods and Titans."

The battle between Jove and his siding hosts against Saturn and the Titans is a war of cosmic forces in which great convulsions of nature are the armies and the artillery,—earthquakes, thunder and lightning, and great wind storms, such as belonged to the earth-drama in early geologic times. Imagine the "Zeitgeist" of such an age incarnate in human forms, and we should have such beings as the Titans, whom Keats has pictured,—large, splendid in their outlines, yet human, too, capable of emotions, gentle as well as fierce. Hyperion, the Sun-God of such an age is

also a humanized cosmic force, of whom gorgeousness is the chief attribute. He gives place to a god of the Sun whose cosmic character is almost completely submerged by mental and spiritual characteristics. As Andrew Lang says:

“If Apollo was originally the Sun it is certain that he has laid aside most of his solar characteristics and put on attributes purely human and divinely Greek. But between him and the old Sun-person of savage thought he has left Helios Hyperion, a being very like the actual Sun in some regards, in others a heroic or divine character who controls the course and drives the chariot of the Sun.”

Keats brings out clearly the difference of the two Sun-Gods. If Hyperion is the “super-man” of an age of cosmic supremacy, Apollo is to be the “super-man” of an age of mind supremacy—the poet and prophet. He has not yet come into his own as the most glorious light-giver of the universe, but Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses has presented him with his lyre, and he is feeling the pain of aspirations and vast longings not yet realized. Just as he is about to realize them, seem-

ingly, the poem stops, yet there must have been a fierce battle to come between these super-men of different ages. They would be foes worthy of each other's steel, and just here comes in the artistic difficulty. Again the thought recurs,—would any one with a keen sense of justice feel satisfied to have Saturn dethroned merely through force of law? If there were any least thing in the portrayal of the Titans, such as there is in both Æschylus's and Shelley's portrayal of Zeus to disgust one with a reign of either cosmic or human force, that they should succumb to law would seem justifiable. As it is we can only foresee that one beauty is to reign in place of another. The spirit of the mind is to have power rather than the spirit of the cosmos. Is it possible to conceive of a warfare between any two such principles of beauty that would not end in some sort of harmony between the two? Progress includes conservation as well as the evolving of higher types, and if law must needs bring it about that Apollo should mount the chariot of the Sun, at least, let us imagine Hyperion as still an outrider, whose office might well be to inspire the younger god with the mighty lore of the ancestral

forces which through countless æons had been preparing the way for him, the seër of beauty past, present and to come.

In giving up "Hyperion," Keats does not seem to have been conscious of any such quarrel between the philosophy and the art of his poem. He writes to Reynolds:

"I have given up Hyperion—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, artist's humor. I wish to give myself up to other sensations."

From this it would appear that he was troubled only by some matters of style. This is further borne out by the fact that he started to rewrite the poem in the form of a vision, but evidently with no intention of unifying the content. He may have been unconscious of the true nature of the difficulty which seemed to interfere with his continuing the poem, namely that his own sympathy with the Titans which manifests itself in his striking delineation of them, was at cross purposes with the thorough carrying out of his theory of the evolution of Beauty, which not only did not admit of

the restoration of the old order with Saturn as king once more, but which looked forward to a time when the new order might give place to a still newer one.

The view is quite the opposite one from Shelley's in his "Prometheus." His philosophy of life takes the more old-fashioned form of a conflict between good and evil, in which the Titan, Prometheus, belonging to the old order through his love for mankind, or because he really is the spirit of mankind incarnate, with the power inherent in it of evolving Love, is to conquer completely the ideal of the autocratic rule of any gods whatever. The principle of Love is to win over the unnatural principle of Force, typified in Zeus, the usurper of the true rights of the human soul. With Keats, the Titans, though it is in the line of progress that they should be usurped by Jupiter and his hierarchy of gods, are not evil forces. They have played their part and a wise part in the phase of development to which they belonged. The first sign of evil in them is when they rebel against the rule of law, and feel fear and hate and revenge against the coming order. In such a philosophy,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Power is the ruling force, untouched by Love, and the Beauty to be evolved would necessarily lack just that element of the eternal, which would give it an abiding place in the evolution of Power.

With greater maturity, Keats might have seen a vision of the future where, as Robert Browning expresses it Power and Love would come full in play, a time when new beauty does not crush the old but is added unto it, a time when Hyperion and Apollo shall join hands:

“ I have faith such end shall be:

From the first, Power was—I knew,

Life has made clear to me

That, strive but for closer view,

Love were as plain to see.

“ When see? When there dawns a day,

If not on the homely earth,

Then yonder, worlds away,

Where the strange and new have birth,

And Power comes full in play.”

The Apollo of the poem is a being quite of the poet's own imagination. The story of the way Apollo came by his lyre in the Homeric Hymn to

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Hermes is prosaic in comparison with the romantic tale of Keats. It also illustrates a step in musical progress, for Apollo had played on the pipes until Hermes gave him the lyre which he had made from a tortoise shell.

“Yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—
Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of trancèd sound—and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voicèd comrade talk with thee,—
It can talk measured music eloquently.”

It was Mnemosyne, however who gave the power of melody to Hermes, though the lyre was his own invention.

A Hymn to Apollo by an Alexandrian Greek, Callimachus, who lived about 250 B.C., though not remarkable from a literary point of view gives a satisfactory presentation of the complete Apollo ideal, including his solar characteristics, as it came to be understood by the Greeks.

“How hath the laurel-shoot of Apollo heaved!
How the whole of the shrine! Afar, afar *be ye*, sin-

ners. Now verily doth Phœbus knock-at the doors with beauteous foot. See you not? The Delian palm has nodded in a pleasant fashion on a sudden, and the swan sings sweetly on the air. Now of your own accord fall back, ye bolts of the doors, and of-yourselves, ye bars. For no longer *is* the god afar-off. Make ready, ye young men, for the song and the choir. Not to every one doth Apollo manifest himself, but to only the good. Whoso shall have seen him, great is he: small that man who hath not seen him.

"We shall behold thee, O Far-darter, and shall be no more of small account. Nor silent lyre nor noiseless tread should the servants of Phœbus have, when he sojourns *among them*.

"Listen, and keep-holy-silence, at the song in honor of Apollo. Even the deep keeps-holy-silence, when minstrels celebrate on lyre or bow the implements of Lycorean Phœbus. Nor does Thetis, his mother, plaintively bewail Achilles, whenever she has heard the Io Pæan, Io Pæan. And even the tearful rock defers its sorrow, *the rock*, which remains fixt, a dripping stone, in Phrygia, the marble in the place of a woman, with a mournful utterance. Sing Io! Io! it is ill to contend with the gods. Whoso contends with immortals, would contend with my king, and whoso with my king, would strive even with Apollo. Apollo will honor the choir, because it sings to his taste; for he is

able, seeing that he sits at Jove's right hand. Nor will the choir sing Apollo for one day only; for he is celebrated-in-many-hymns. Who would not easily sing of Apollo? Golden are both the garment, and the clasp of Apollo, his lyre, his Lyctian bow, and his quiver: golden, too, his sandals; for Apollo is rich in gold, and has also many possessions. One might guess this at Pytho. And, indeed, he is ever-beauteous, ever young; never hath so much as a little down come upon the soft cheeks of Phæbus. But his locks distil odorous oils upon the ground. Not mere oil do the tresses of Apollo drop down, but healing itself: and in whatsoever city those dewes shall have fallen upon the ground, all things are wont to become safe. Great, too, in art is no one so much as Apollo. He has attained for his lot the archer, he the minstrel; for to Phæbus bow as well as song is intrusted. To him, likewise, belong divinations and diviners: and from Phæbus physicians have learned the art of delaying death. Phæbus also we call Nomian, even from that time, even from the time when by Amphrysus he tended the yoked mares, fired with love for the young Admetos. Easily would the cattle pasture become abundant, nor would the bleating she-goats lack younglings, on which, as they pasture, Apollo hath cast his eyes. Nor *would* sheep be without milk, or unfruitful, but all would suckle lambs. And following Phæbus

men are wont to measure out cities. For Phœbus ever delights in founding cities, and Phœbus, himself lays their foundations. At four years of age Phœbus laid the first foundations in fair Ortygia, near the circular lake. The huntress, Artemis, was wont to bring constantly the heads of Cynthian she-goats, but *from them* Apollo was weaving an altar. The foundations he laid with horns; from horns he built the altar itself, and placed under it walls of horn around. Thus first learned Phœbus to raise foundations. Phœbus, too, pointed-out to Battus my fertile native-country, and to his people entering Libya a crow, propitious to the leader-of-a-colony, was guide, and swore that he would give walls to our sovereigns. Apollo ever keeps-his-oath-inviolable. Many, O Apollo, call thee Bœdromian, many Clarian (for everywhere thy name is manifold). But I style thee Carnean: it is my country's wont to do so. To thee, O Carnean god, Sparta, this was the first settlement; a second, again, was Thera; a third, I wot, the city of Cyrene. From Sparta the sixth descendant of CEdipus led thee to the colonizing of Tera, and from Tera vigorous Battus consigned thee to the country of Asbystis. He built thee a very noble temple; and in the city instituted a yearly festival, at which many bulls, great king, fall on their haunches for the last time.

“Io! Io! Carnean *god*, much supplicated: thine

altars carry flowers indeed in spring as many and various as the seasons bring, when the Zephyr breathes dew; and in winter the sweet crocus. And ever hast thou eternal fire, nor ever do ashes consume yesterday's coal.

"Greatly, I wot, joyed Phœbus, when Enyo's belted heroes danced with brown Libyan women, when the settled seasons of the Carnean festival arrived for them. But the Dorians were not yet able to approach the fountain of Cyre, but were inhabiting Aziris thick-girt with woods. These the god himself beheld, and showed them to his bride, as he stood on the point of Myrtusa, when the daughter of Hypsæus slew the lion, ravager of the oxen of Eurypylus.

"No other choir saw Apollo more worthy of a god than that, nor to *other* city gave he so many advantages as to Cyrene, being mindful of the ancient rape: no, nor do the Battiadæ themselves honor other god more than Phœbus. We hear Io, Io, Pæan! for the Delphic people invented this refrain first of all in honor of thee, when thou didst display the far-range of thy golden bow and arrows. As thou wentest down to Pytho there encountered thee a monstrous beast, a terrible serpent. This monster thou killedst hurling one swift arrow after another: while the people shouted in acclamation, 'Io! Io Pæan! let fly thy shaft; thy mother bare thee a helper from-the-first'! And thus thou art celebrated even from that time."

To poets, Apollo has always been chiefly the symbol of poetry, his other attributes being overshadowed by this highest function of the human mind. Besides the passage in "Hyperion," Keats wrote an ode and a hymn to Apollo. In the Ode, Apollo is praised as the inspirer of all the great bards:

" In thy western halls of gold
 When thou sittest in thy state,
 Bards, that erst sublimely told
 Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
 With fervor seize their adamantyne lyres,
 Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant
 fires.

" Here Homer with his nervous arms
 Strikes the twanging harp of war,
 And even the western splendor warms,
 While the trumpets sound afar:
 But, what creates the most intense surprise,
 His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

" Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells
 The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre:
 The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—
 Enraptur'd dwells,—not daring to respire,
 The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

- " 'T is awful silence then again;
Expectant stand the spheres;
Breathless the laurell'd peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.
- " Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,
And quickly forward spring
The Passions—a terrific band—
And each vibrates the string
That with its tyrant temper best accords,
While from their Master's lips pour forth the in-
spiring words.
- " A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'T is still! Wild warblings from the Æolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly ex-
pire.
- " Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
Float along the pleasèd air,
Calling youth from idle slumbers,
Rousing them from Pleasure's lair:—
Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
And melt the soul to pity and to love.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
 We listen here on earth:
The dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From thee, Great God of Bards, receive their heav-
 enly birth.”

In the Hymn, he expresses a mood of modesty on his own part, wondering why the god of poetry had not rained down upon him, crushing ire for his presumption in putting on the laurel wreath.

“ God of the golden bow,
 And of the golden lyre,
And of the golden hair,
 And of the golden fire,
 Charioteer
 Of the patient year,
Where—where slept thine ire,
When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
 Thy laurel, thy glory,
 The light of thy story,
Or was I a worm—too low crawling, for death?
 O Delphic Apollo!

“ The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,
 The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd;

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

The eagle's feathery mane
For wrath became stiffen'd—the sound
Of breeding thunder
Went drowsily under,
Muttering to be unbound.
O why didst thou pity, and for a worm
Why touch thy soft lute
Till the thunder was mute,
Why was not I crush'd—such a pitiful germ?
O Delphic Apollo!

“The Pleiades were up,
Watching the silent air;
The seeds and roots in the Earth
Were swelling for summer fare;
The Ocean, its neighbour,
Was at its old labour,
When, who—who did dare
To tie, like a madman, thy plant round his brow,
And grin and look proudly,
And blaspheme so loudly,
And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now?
O Delphic Apollo!”

These immature poems are, of course, not to be compared with the aspiring, suffering Apollo of whom we get a tantalizing glimpse in “Hyperion.” Shelley's Hymn to Apollo is far finer.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

It combines the conception of the personal cosmic Sun-god treading the sky, with the idea of supreme intelligence, which includes knowledge, wisdom and art, and also that of the power of the Sun as known to modern science. In this poem the Sun-god describes himself, and never has it been more completely, tersely and grandly done:

- “The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
 Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
 Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,
Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.
- “Then I arise, and climbing Heaven’s blue dome,
 I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe up on the ocean foam;
 My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.
- “The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
 Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
 Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of night.

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
 With their ethereal colors; the moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
 Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

“ I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
 Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
 For grief that I depart they weep and frown.
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

“ I am the eye with which the Universe
 Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
 All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of Art or Nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in their own right belong.”

Differentiated sunshine is the striking and suggestive phrase used by John Fiske in his “ Cosmic Philosophy ” to stand for all things whatsoever to be found in this great world of ours; from the tiny sun-dew, hid in the secret-abiding places of

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

spreading swamp lands, and the inconsequent midget it opens its sticky little fists to grasp to the great forest-tree and all-consequent man armed with his conquering "broad-axe." It is merely a terse, symbolic way of describing the processes of cosmic evolution from the Sun as the original source and continuous guiding power of our own especial universe.

If this be true of the physical world, it is also largely true of the mental world, especially in the earlier phases of its development. Groping our way back into the shadows of the past, we find the Sun with the various phenomena which cluster about his daily progress through the heavens, a chief factor in myth.

We have already observed how the personal Sun figures in primitive and culture lore, but back of that there were animistic conceptions of the Sun such as that of Manabozho or the great White Hare of Algonquin legend, or Indra, the Bull Sun of India. In course of time the zoömorphy Sun gives place to the anthropomorphic Sun and finally we arrive at such personifications of the Sun as Osiris in Egypt, Apollo in Greece, and

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Balder in Norse mythology. Indeed, it might almost be said that all the great steps in the on-march of the human race could be found recorded in the various and multiple personifications of the Sun. The Moon has also had her share in recording through the ages the mental development of the race. Nor did this office on the part of Sun and Moon cease with the downfall of Paganism—"the death of the great god Pan."

The myth inspiring power of the Sun and Moon has been just as pervading a force with poets of the Christian era as it was with the primitive savage or the Pagan culture poets, the difference being that the Christian poet does not proceed to worship with an elaborate ritual, the objects about which he invents myths.

The most obvious way of the Sun's appearance is, of course, in the imagery and allusions borrowed from the classics, and how they are used is not a bad index of a poet's originality. In Spenser, for example, the Sun is just as much Phœbus as it ever was to the ancients. He rarely mentions any solar phenomena without bringing in Phœbus and his flaming steeds or his fiery chariot:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“Now ’gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
His fiery face in billows of the West.”

Or:

“And now fair Phœbus ’gan decline in haste
His weary wagon to the Western vale.”

Shakespeare’s Phœbus, on the other hand ventures upon a most original experiment: He “’gins to rise, his steeds to water at those springs on chaliced flowers that lies.” Only Shakespeare would have dared to combine in thought the gigantic conception of cosmic steeds with the pigmy springs in flower cups.

As soon as the English poets found out that they had eyes of their own, they began looking at the Sun directly instead of alone through the medium of classical spectacles. In Shakespeare the allusions to the Sun itself are far more numerous than those to Phœbus. With the decline of the classical practice of picturing the Sun in human guise, grew up a more subtle form of personification, that is, the personification is passed over from the subject and centered upon the verb—a good ex-

ample of which is to be found in Shakespeare's
 "I. Henry IV":

"How bloodily the Sun begins to peer
 Above yon bosky hill! the day looks pale
 At his distemperature."

It is a curious fact that, although Keats showed such fine imaginative power when developing in long poems, the myths of the Sun and Moon, his allusions to them scattered throughout his works are for the most part slavishly classical. It is generally Apollo or Cynthia or Diana who furnishes him with his metaphor or symbol, rarely the Sun or the Moon. He could invent new doings for the ancient gods, but it did not seem to enter his head to invent new personifications for the Sun and Moon which shone in his own daily life. Often he succeeds in putting a lovely freshness into these allusions, as for example this in "I Stood Tiptoe Upon a Little Hill":

"Open afresh your round of starry folds,
 Ye ardent marigolds!
 Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
 For great Apollo bids

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale."

Another beautiful allusion to the chariot of Apollo occurs in "Sleep and Poetry":

"And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts: for lo! I see afar,
O'er-sailing the blue cragginess, a car
And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:
And now the numerous tramlings quiver lightly
Along a huge cloud's ridge; and now with sprightly
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.
Still downward with capacious whirl they glide;
And now I see them on a green-hill's side
In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.
The charioteer with wond'rous gesture talks
To the trees and mountains; and there soon appear
Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Passing along before a dusky space
Made by some mighty oaks: as they would chase
Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.
Lo! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep:
Some with upholden hand and mouth severe;
Some with their faces muffled to the ear
Between their arms; some, clear in youthful bloom,
Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom;
Some looking back, and some with upward gaze;
Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls
Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls;
And now broad wings. Most awfully intent
The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
And seems to listen: O that I might know
All that he writes with such a hurrying glow.”

Among the dainty allusions to Cynthia is one
in the “ Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke ”:

“ To see high, golden corn wave in the light
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer’s night,
And peers among the cloudlet’s jet and white,
As though she were reclining in a bed
Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed,”

and in the “ Ode to a Nightingale ” is one which
perhaps escapes from the all-pervading presence
of Cynthia:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“ . . . tender is the night
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays.”

The Moon suggested more pictures to Shelley than the Sun, and why should it not? for Nature has given to the Moon more variation of appearance, and consequently more power of inducing complementary moods in the poet. The Sun generally suggested to Shelley its actual self rather than any mythical fancies. Thus in his poem “Evening,” he directly describes the appearance and the effect of sunlight.

“ O Thou bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line
Of western distance that sublime descendest,
And, gleaming lovelier as thy beams decline,
Thy million hues to every vapor lendest,
And, over cobweb, lawn and grove and stream
Sheddest the liquid magic of thy light,
Till calm Earth, with the parting splendor bright,
Shows like the vision of a beauteous dream.”

Again in “Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills” he has:

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

“Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height.”

He even descends in his verse to the wholly unpoetical statement “The Sun has set.”

The chief of Shelley's Moon pictures is the Moon in “Prometheus Unbound,” which symbolizes emotion raised to its highest spiritual expression. A more familiar one, which lends its charm to the Moon for many a dreamer on moonlight nights, is the stanza in “The Cloud,” describing how

“That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;

And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent
Till the calm rivers, lakes and seas
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the Moon and these."

Among his fragments are three strikingly different personifications of the Moon—all of them as far away from the ideal of Cynthia or Diana as they could well be. The Waning Moon, as Shelley saw it, was

"Like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain."

At another time she was a

"Bright wanderer, fair coquette of heaven,
To whom alone it has been given
To change and be adored forever."

Again he questions:

"Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?"

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

Scattered throughout his poems are lovely Moon pictures such as

“The pallid semicircle of the Moon
Passed on, in slow and moving majesty;
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
But slowly, fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.”

Or this in “The Witch of Atlas”:

“Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden
With that bright sign the billows to indent
The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,
At her command they ever came and went.”

In a little lyric called “The World’s Wanderers,” the Moon appears in another guise:

“Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of heaven’s homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?”

When the fascinations of comparative mythology first cast their spell over the inquiring human mind, surprise and delight were manifested chiefly over the remarkable resemblances which were discovered to exist between the myths of all races

ANCIENT MYTHS IN MODERN POETS

and climes. Then came a wild orgy of theorizing as to the causes of these resemblances. The original human cradle was declared to have been first rocked in places as far asunder as Central Asia and Norway, and all the resemblances were traced back to a homogeneous ancestry in one or other of these cradles, which migrating into heterogeneous regions carried with it the memory of its early infantine fancies. Then there were borrowing theories describing how once upon a time the Bards of the Kalevala had pow-wows with Algonquin Indians, or Polynesians skipped over the Atlantic on a chain of now submerged islands to shake hands with the Incas of Peru. These theories are all the more delightful because they cannot any of them be proved to any one's satisfaction. The difficulty is now more or less solved by a simple conclusion which has been arrived at after an exercise of much laborious scholarship. Given the human mind and its environment in Nature and its relationship with other human beings and it is pretty sure to evolve ideas and fancies that resemble each other when at the same stage of growth.

Resemblances thus accounted for, the way is opened for the really far more delightful pastime of observing the differences in myth, which are found to be quite as surprising as the resemblances. These carry us on as we have seen in the present volume from the fancies of the primitive savage, through the lofty poetic and philosophical thought of Pagan culture-lore to the more highly evolved imagination and consciousness of latter-day poets. To compare what a Shelley or a Keats has done with an idea which was embryonic in a savage mind, which has had upon it the illumination of Pagan culture, or to compare these with what other latter-day poets have done with the same idea is to throw a brilliant illumination upon the development of the imaginative powers of the human intellect. It shows us the mighty force of Beauty growing, growing from the dawn of time, blossoming now here now there in forms of simple loveliness, or forms of awe-inspiring grandeur, gathering as it moves onward greater strength for greater ends until its spirit shall give itself wholly forth in a vast harmony of bloom.

Date Due

25641

821.09
C598

